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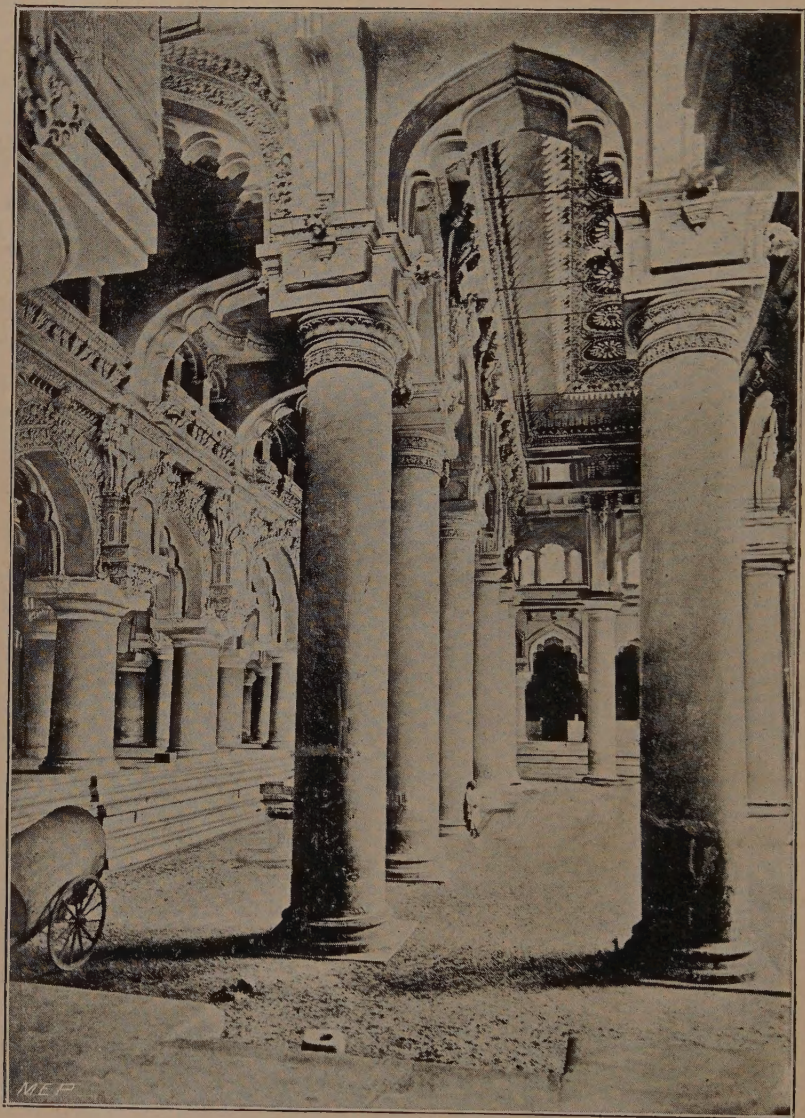












THE PALACE, MADURA



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History of  
The Jesuit Mission in Madura  
South India

IN THE  
SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

BY  
J. S. CHANDLER, M.A.

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MADRAS  
M. E. PUBLISHING HOUSE  
1909



## PREFACE

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THE materials from which this little book has been made are largely from five volumes of a work entitled, "Letters from Jesuits in Madura in Latin, Portuguese and Italian, translated into French in 1848."

The history is a remarkable one, and it is due to the missionaries of that Madura Mission that we let them tell their own story.

Furthermore, all Christian workers in South India have many of the same problems to meet that confronted those men of the seventeenth century, and cannot but feel an interest in their methods and results.

My grateful acknowledgments are due to Father Pages of the Society of Jesus for kindly lending me the volumes of letters, now out of print and difficult to obtain; also to Dr. Harriet E. Parker of the American Mission for bringing her excellent knowledge of French to my aid in reading to me the historical portions of the letters.

---

### LETTERS QUOTED IN THIS VOLUME.

- Laerzio ... Pere Albert Laerzio, Provincial of Malabar.  
November 20, 1609, from Cochin, to the General S. J.  
December 8, 1610, and November 25, 1611, to Pere Claude Aqua Viva, General S. J.
- De Nobili ... December 24, 1608, to Laerzio, reported by Laerzio.  
July 19, 1609, to "Fathers and Brothers in Cochin."  
June 12, 1610, to Pere Antonio Vico.  
1627, to Mascareguas, Assistant of Portugal.  
October 18, 1638, to Vitelleschi.
- de Borges ... Pere Jean de Borges.  
December 31, 1608, from Vaypar, Cochin.
- Leitan ... September 26 and November 20, 1609, to General S. J.
- Vico ... Pere Antonio Vico, Professor of Theology at Cochin.  
October 25 and November 22, 1610, August 30, 1611, November 1620, to General Aqua Viva, S. J.  
November 1622, 1624, 1625, 1632, to Vitelleschi.

- Martinz ... 1638 from Trichinopoly, to Vitelleschi.  
 1639 from Trichinopoly, to Fathers of Portugal.  
 December 31, 1651, from Sattiamangalam to General S. J.
- Maya ... Pere Sebastian Maya.  
 1640 from Madura Prison, to Azevedo, Provincial of Malabar.
- Da Costa ... July 1643 from Trichinopoly, to Father Provincial.  
 1644 and 1648 from Trichinopoly, to General Caraffa, S. J.  
 1653 from Tanjore, to "Fathers and Brethren of Coimbre and d'Evora."
- Proenza ... 1659 and 1660 from Trichinopoly, to General Nickel, S. J.
- Freire ... Pere Freire, Missionary of Madura.  
 1666 from Kandalur, 1676 from Kallayi, 1678 from Viranam,  
 1682 from Vadugapatti, to General Oliva, S. J.
- Mello ... 1686, to General Noyelle, S. J.
- Martin ... January 30, 1699 from Balasore, Bengal, to Vilette.  
 June 1, 1700, from Kamianayakanpatti, Madura, and December 11, 1700, from Aviur, to Gobien.
- Manduit ... September 29, 1700, from Puliur, to Gobien.
- Dolu ... October 4, 1700, from Pondicherry, to Gobien.
- Bouchet ... December 1, 1700, from Madura.

## GLOSSARY.

- Adigari ... A petty Ruler.
- Ambalagaran Chief Man.
- Ayyer ... Spiritual Father, Master of the House.
- Chetti ... Trader Caste Man.
- Fanam ... Gold Coin worth  $3\frac{1}{2}$  rupees.
- Guru ... Spiritual Teacher, one who makes clear the explanation of things.
- Ideian ... Shepherd Caste Man.
- Kudumi ... Tuft of Hair on the Crown of the Head.
- Lingam ... Phallic Emblem of Siva.
- Mandapam ... Rest House.
- Maniagaran ... Village Officer.
- Mudali ... Accountant Caste Man.
- Munivar ... Sage.
- Munshi ... Teacher of Language.
- Pandaram ... Religious Mendicant, Mendicant Priest.
- Parangi ... Franc, Firingi, a contemptuous term for Europeans.
- Paravan ... Fisher Caste Man.
- Pradani ... Minister of State.
- Sannyasi ... One who has renounced the World.
- Satti ... Burning of a Widow on her Husband's Pyre.
- Talavay ... Prime Minister.
- Vadugan ... Northerner speaking Telugu.
- Valeian ... Hunter Caste Man.
- Vellalan ... Farmer Caste Man.
- Yogi ... Ascetic.

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# THE MADURA MISSION OF THE JESUITS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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### 1. *Political Environment.*

THE Muhamadans first invaded India in 1001 from the north, and had gradually pushed their conquests southward for three centuries, when Muhamad of Delhi undertook to subjugate all India. The old Pandya, Sola, and Sera kingdoms of the south had disintegrated into lesser states, when in 1336 Muhamad Tughlak seized Anegundi on the north bank of the Tungabudra, and made its late minister governor.

This governor, Harihara Deva, founded Vijayanagar on the south bank of the river, and ruled with such authority that his second successor, Harihara II., was able to renounce allegiance to the Muhamadans, and unite the scattered elements of Hindu power into a new empire that saved the south from the Muhamadans for more than two centuries. Harihara II. styled himself Rajaraja, or king of kings, and within a hundred years his successors ruled from sea to sea, and from the Dakhan to Cape Comorin. These are called "the fighting kings of Vijayanagar." They are said to have possessed sixty seaports. The emperor Raja Ram, 1542-65, was the greatest potentate in India next to the emperor of Delhi.

As the Vijayanagar power had united the scattered Hindu kingdoms to throw back the tide of Muhamadan conquest, so in 1564 the sultans of Bijapur and three other Muhamadan states combined against Vijayanagar. In 1565 they beheaded Raja Ram after a great battle, sacked his city, and destroyed its temples and palaces beyond recovery. While Raja Ram's successors wandered about setting up their court in Tanjore, Vellore,\* Mysore, and other places, their tributary states further south set up for themselves under chieftains of the Nayaka caste.

---

\* Proenza, 1659.

These Nayakars\* established themselves in four territories and founded the kingdoms of Mysore, Madura, Tanjore and Ginji. The greatest Nayaka ruler was Tirumala of Madura. He reigned from 1623 to 1659 over the southern regions from Trichinopoly to Travancore. Having separated from Vijayanagar, he built two fortresses on his frontier and raised an army of 30,000 men.

Tirumala had very little territory of his own.† His kingdom was apportioned among seventy-two tributary lords, called *poligars*, who had full police power, administered justice within their own estates, paid fixed tribute to the king, and maintained each a certain quota of troops ready for immediate service. Each poligar was responsible for the defence of one of the seventy-two bastions of the fortress of Madura City. The greatest chieftain of Tirumala was nicknamed "Erumeikatti" for his great strength in overcoming a wild buffalo ("Erumei") at the annual sacrifice of a buffalo in honour of the Nayakar. He was the brother of a powerful lord and related to the king. The Brahman quarters of the city belonged to him‡, and he was bound to support for the service of Tirumala Nayakar 3,000 infantry, 200 horse, and 50 elephants.

In 1638, when the king of Vijayanagar made one of his sporadic excursions against the Nayakars to enforce tribute, Tirumala§ formed a league with the governors of Tanjore and Ginji to resist the invader. When the Tanjore Nayakar betrayed his allies and yielded to Vijayanagar, Tirumala|| induced the Sultan of the Musalman kingdom of Golconda to attack the Vijayanagar king from the north. This averted the attack of the king only to bring down upon all three of the Nayakars the army of Golconda.

Tirumala then played the same game against the Sultan of Golconda, and sent ambassadors to Adil Shah of Bijapur, the Musalman power of the Deccan. Adil Shah¶ sent 17,000 horse to unite with 30,000 troops furnished by Tirumala for the attack on the Golconda army near the fortress of Ginji. When the two forces met, the Bijapur army fraternized with the army it was sent to attack, with the result that the Hindus lost the powerful fortress with immense spoil.

\* Proenza, 1659.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

† Vico, Aug. 30, 1611.

§ Proenza, 1659.

¶ *Id.*

Conquest of  
Madura.

Forthwith the Bijapur army marched against Tanjore and Madura. The Tanjore Nayakar\* concealed himself in his forests, the Madura man in his fort, but both submitted, and the victory of the

Musalmans was complete without a blow. Thus after an interval of 300 years, the Musalmans were for a second time supreme in Madura, and Tirumala promised to pay annual tribute to the Sultan of Bijapur.

The Marava Tribe.

Gradually the kingdom of Vijayanagar became extinct. But Madura had to defend itself against attacks from the other Nayaka kingdoms. One of these attacks was by the army of Mysore in 1659.† They had advanced to the walls of Madura, and Tirumala was about to flee to the woods when the chief of the Maravans, a tributary warrior tribe, came to his defence. In one day he assembled 25,000 men and so encouraged Tirumala, that the latter gathered together 35,000 more. A furious combat followed and each army left more than 12,000 dead on the field of battle; but Madura was saved. Under orders from the King of Mysore,‡ the invaders had been cutting off the noses of all prisoners, men, women, and children, and sending them in sacks to Seringapatam as glorious trophies. In retaliation the troops of Tirumala carried the war into Mysore and scattered through the country for noses. They even captured the King and cut off his nose and sent it to Madura. This expedition was known as the "Chase after Noses."

Before the return of this expedition Tirumala died. He was seventy years old, and had reigned thirty-six years.§ He had two hundred wives, and the most distinguished of them were burned on his funeral pyre. With all his wars, Tirumala had time to erect three groups of immense buildings, viz., additions to the great temple, the raft tank, and the vast palace. The raft tank is a lake covering twenty-two acres of ground, and tradition declares that he made the temple and palace each of the same size. The temple never was finished to that extent; and the great palace,|| said to be the "most majestic monument that existed in these countries," was dismantled within twenty-five years after Tirumala's death, and left in ruins.

Neither Madura afterwards, nor the other Nayaka kingdoms, ever attained the eminence that Madura had under Tirumala.

\* Proenza, 1659.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*

|| Freire, 1666.

His successors\* pursued his fatal policy of calling the Musalmans to his aid, while enfeebling themselves by treacheries, intrigues, and turmoils. Finally the last vestiges of their rule were extinguished by the Mahrattas in 1740. The Nayaka idea,† as that of any monarch in those days, was that of a great proprietor owning the kingdom as a vast farm, to be exploited for his own advantage. He had energy and sagacity to extort from his subjects all the money possible; but was blind, negligent, and feeble to excess in all that regarded good order and the repression of crimes and injustices. These things were left to subaltern chiefs of castes, and they were skilful in rendering themselves independent.

**Decline of the  
Nayakars.**

*2. Social and Religious Environment.*

At times famines desolated the country and millions are said to have perished. One of the kings once gave a banquet‡ to the poor on the banks of the Kavery near Trichinopoly. Troops of servants placed the cooked rice on plantain leaves in long rows, and the king himself rode his horse between the rows of people to see that all were fed. But only a few could be thus supplied. One famine in the Marava country lasted seven years, from 1678 to 1685. Bands of tigers§ roamed around, any one of which would attack singly a company of a hundred persons, seize the first victim, and carry him off. In one place, besides cattle, more than seventy persons|| disappeared within a few days. The terror of the people was so great that at night they would set guards with fires. They dared not travel by night, and were not always safe by day. Madura city¶ was so deserted after Tirumala's time that wolves, bears, and tigers roamed in its streets, even entering private yards. Locusts destroyed the crops and stinging insects infested the whole country. In some famines the people left the dead on the banks of rivers without trying to bury them.

**Desolation of  
Famines.**

**Daring Robbers.**

Professional robbers\*\* infested these regions, and when the Musalmans invaded them they feared the robbers more than the armies of the Nayakars. These robbers would come out of the woods in little bands, spread themselves through the country, attack the Musalmans,

\* Freire, 1682.

§ Mello, 1686.

¶ Vico, Nov. 1622.

† Martinz, Dec. 31, 1651.

|| Martin, June 1, 1700.

\*\* Proenza, 1665.

‡ Proenza, 1660.



and then suddenly disperse to meet in the woods at a whistle. Almost any one of them could "run like lightning, jump on a horse and ride it away without any bridle, and dash through any band of men."

Twelve miles from Tanjore\* lived Meicondan, a famous robber chief, who was called "king of the forests." Campaigns were conducted against him, but he was always victorious, even repulsing the cavalry of Adil Shah. He knew the Christian missionaries, and before going into battle would kneel and call on Jesus Christ. Other chiefs united against him and secured his stronghold by the help of traitors. But Meicondan and a few of his friends forced a passage and escaped. The victors burned his village and went to his palace to set fire to it with their own hands, when a magazine of powder underneath exploded and blew up forty of them.

Thirty miles north of Trichinopoly† there was a famous brigand, not of the professional robber caste, but an outcaste Pareian. He was dreaded by all on account of his ferocity. At the age of ninety he turned to the fanatical worship of various gods. At last he wandered to Trichinopoly, and at night fell into the moat of the citadel, where he expired the next day.

Musalman invaders‡ always struck terror to the hearts of the people, as they destroyed harvests, burned villages, and enslaved the people. Nobles would immolate their wives and children, then pierce themselves with their own swords. Whole families would burn themselves in their houses. One man is said to have come out alive from under a pile of four hundred corpses. The Mahratta troops were just as cruel. They opened the abdomens of people for treasures.

The prime minister of Tanjore§ was allowed by the king to despoil all his vassals; and he mulcted both labourers and merchants to such an extent that they fled, leaving the city deserted. The king had intended to secure the plunder for himself, but the minister was too far-sighted for him, so at last he gave him up to the fury of the people. The prime minister of Madura acted in the same way; but that king fined him 300,000 crowns, and he made the people pay the fine, in addition to all his own booty. After the army of Mysore|| had occupied Madura city and then been expelled by the Nayakar of Madura, one of

\* Proenza 1660.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

§ Freire, 1666.

|| Mello, 1686.

the poligars, "a just and pacific man," while visiting the Nayakar to congratulate him on regaining his city, was arrested, deprived of the jewels on his person, and shut up in a cell; and troops were sent to despoil his territory, and seize and torture his wives to make them reveal his hidden treasures. Worse still was a governor in Trichinopoly,\* who on his appointment to office invited a chief to his palace, and while he was there sent soldiers to plunder his harvests, and at the same time tortured his guest to make him reveal his treasures.

**Superstitious  
Kings.**

One of the Tanjore Nayakars used to spend the month of December in the midst of his idols at the temple of Mannar,† the god from whom he claimed descent. Two hours before daybreak he would go to the inner sanctuary, staying five hours at a time and showering flowers upon the head of his god. Cultivators had orders to bring him flowers in abundance from hour to hour. He would live as a saniyasi, cooking his own food in vessels of gold and silver. In proceeding to the temple he would have the guru, or priest, carried in a palanquin by the ladies of his court; another palanquin bore the guru's slippers; while between the two palanquins walked the king bearing a censer. This same king once made a pilgrimage to the island of Rameswaram to bathe in the tank that was reputed to have the quality of washing out all sins, because the goddess of the place was wont to bathe in it. Before the bath the king and all his nobles were shaved from head to foot; and then the king had himself and his queen weighed in scales before the idol, and presented an equal weight of gold to the goddess. On his return to his own capital it was found that his special god Mannar was jealous of his generosity to the goddess; so he appeased the god by presenting him 20,000 crowns of gold. Another Nayakar of Tanjore had been defeated by the King of Madura, so his Brahman advisers declared that he should be re-born.‡ A colossal cow in bronze was cast in a mould, and the king was shut inside. The wife of the king's Brahman guru acted as nurse, received him in her arms, rocked him on her knees, and caressed him on her breast, while he tried to cry like a baby. The neighbours could not restrain their laughter, but the ceremony brought immense sums to the Brahmans.

\* Mello, 1686.

† Proenza, 1653.

‡ *Id.*, 1660.

The life of a subject was not regarded by a king if his anger or cupidity were aroused. One governor was **Disregard of Life.** known to be scourged by order of the Nayakar so severely that he died under the process. Another was shamefully deposed; and the report prevailed that at a pilgrimage during an eclipse of the sun, the king had the man's hands and feet cut off.

If life was lightly esteemed by kings in regard to their subjects, individuals did not hesitate on slight provocation to take their own lives. The prince of Manamadura,\* when struck by some one, could wipe out the reproach only by taking his own life. When converts were joining the Christian priest a pandaram killed himself in his rage. The castes were divided into those of the right hand and left hand. The judge of the castes of the left hand had such authority that in grave necessities, when the gods had to be appeased by a human victim, he was the one to designate the unhappy person who should immolate himself. Such grave necessity might occur, for instance when a king threatened to desecrate a temple. At such a time† a man would climb to the top of a tower of the temple and vow, that if the king persisted, or if the quarrel were not ended by a certain time, he would throw himself down. Neither the king nor the priests of the temple cared to be held guilty of his blood and both parties would be interested to heal the breach.

Belief in the power of magic and sorcery was universal. An illustration of this is found in the recorded effort of a yogi (ascetic) to resuscitate his waning influence by causing a stone bull to eat. A large crowd gathered, and great quantities of rice and other grains were served. But Rudra's beast was not hungry. The yogi made many grimaces, threatened, and finally even employed the rattan; and still the bull remained motionless. But not so the crowd; they overwhelmed the yogi with blows, and he barely escaped by the help of his friends. He was conducted to the frontier of that territory by soldiers, and forbidden ever again to enter the kingdom.

**Expectations of a Divine Emperor.** Mysterious and extraordinary rumours, spreading in every direction and throwing the whole country into a state of great nervous excitement, spring up now and again in India, no one knows where or how. This was true of the times of the Nayakars. An infant

\* Vico, Nov. 22, 1610. † Blackader, quoted in the Gazetteer of the Madura Dt,

emperor of divine birth was to appear from the north and usher in a millennium of peace and plenty.\* Large sums were collected for the use of the deliverer when he should arrive. One and another were thought to be the fulfilment of the universal expectation. A woman of Vellore† was noted throughout India as a being almost divine. She was supposed to have slept continuously for seven years, and yet to have had three sons and three daughters in that time, born from her sides, brain, and mouth. One son from her side was declared to be the promised one. He was to be a new form of Vishnu, the tenth incarnation.

A poor woman‡ with a blind husband proclaimed herself the ambassadress of the mother of the new divine emperor. Whole villages went out to meet her, and people thought themselves fortunate if they could drink the water in which she had washed her feet. One day she arrived at the rest-house in Madura on a horse, with an umbrella and some fine cloths, accompanied by a dozen ministers. The queen-mother of the Nayakar received her with great honour, and caused a palace to be prepared for her. Certain Christians at court suggested deceit, and soldiers were secreted in her new palace. She pretended never to eat, but the soldiers soon found that while she was resting alone she was enjoying an excellent repast. They took her to the Nayakar, and she confessed and was expelled from the country.

Another woman§ who had a son that was supposed to be the divine emperor, was taken to Bangalore. Vast multitudes flocked thither to offer presents and worship the young king. The Musalman rulers seconded their pretensions and set guards over them, nominally to protect them, but really to prevent their escape. They maliciously let them get all they could out of the people they duped, then cruelly beheaded the child and also killed the mother, and took all the riches they had accumulated. The yogis declared that they would come to life again.

### 3. *Earlier Christian Efforts.*

From a time not later than the fifth century, a large community of Syrian Christians, claiming the Apostle Thomas as their founder, have maintained themselves in Malabar on the west coast of South India, enjoying the esteem of their Hindu neighbours. In 1442, one of them was prime minister to the king of

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\* Madura Gazetteer.

† Da Costa, 1653.

‡ Martinz, Dec. 31, 1651.

§ Da Costa, 1653.

Vijayanagar, and later on another conducted the negotiations of the Portuguese with the Cochin Raja.

“Among the Portuguese navigators who found their way to Hindustan by sea in the fifteenth century, were many knights of the Order of Christ, one of the military-religious orders instituted to fight against Mahommedanism.” Believing that an attack on the eastern countries, whence Islam derived its strength, would create a diversion in favour of those who were striving to drive Islam from Europe, these knights joined in the voyage of discovery set on foot by their grand-master, the Infant Don Henry of Portugal. And it was to them, and not to the Portuguese king or nation, that the first attributions of Indian territory were made by the Holy See for the protection of Christianity. This is the assertion of the Jesuit author, W. Strickland, in “Catholic Missions in Southern India to 1865.”

Goa was captured by the Portuguese in 1510, and forthwith the natives were brought under compulsion to become Christians. The king of Portugal was asked to tell commandants that, if they did not propagate the faith, they would be deprived of all their possessions, their money and other property spent on works of mercy, and themselves detained for long terms in chains and imprisonment. Native authorities were threatened with imprisonment and deportation to Goa. Money was also freely distributed. Xavier's letters show that at one time the governor of Goa gave 4,000 gold fanams (Rs. 15,000 or £1,500) to be distributed in thirty villages, Rs. 500 (£50) in each.

Under the Dominican friars, the Inquisition was established in 1650. It was used to force Syrian Christians as well as non-Christians into the Roman Catholic Church. A Portuguese writer, Da Fonseca, states that seventy-one auto-da-fés were held in 174 years and that at ‘a few of them’ 4,046 persons were punished, of whom not less than fifty-seven were burned alive. A more humane, as well as potent, influence for conversion was the deliverance of the fisher class, the Paravans, from their Muhamadan masters and oppressors in the year 1532. These converts were the only lasting ones.

Francis Xavier, one of the first associates of Ignatius Loyola, landed in Goa in May 1592, and at once devoted himself to the reformation of the nominal Christians whom he found there from his own country. After



he had "changed the face of Goa," as he wrote, he went southward to preach among the Paravans along the coast of Travancore, on the south-west extremity of the Indian peninsula. Their gratitude to the Portuguese for deliverance from Musalman oppressors gave Xavier his opportunity, and by his timely labours among them nearly all were converted to Christianity.

His method \* was to enter a village, carrying a bell to ring for the sake of calling the people together. He did not think great learning necessary, and did not himself learn Tamil, the vernacular; but what he did do was to commit to memory in that language the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and certain prayers to the Virgin. These he would repeat in a loud voice, calling upon the people to repeat them after him. Then he would baptize those that consented to receive baptism. As he passed on from village to village, he would leave in each palm-leaf books containing the lessons to be committed to memory. In this way he claimed to have left Christian doctrine in writing in all towns and villages.

Xavier wrote of the obstacles he had to meet. The first was the heat, though he was able to bear great fatigue. Another obstacle was in the Christians themselves. They committed great sins in carving idols and getting drunk. They were also litigious, and Xavier used his influence to end their law-suits by arbitration, which was indeed the custom of the country. The greatest obstacle, after all, was in the unbelievers. The Brahmans he declared to be "liars and cheats to the very back-bone, with hardly a tincture of literature, but making up for their poverty in learning by cunning and malice;" the most of the population he found "barbarous and ignorant."

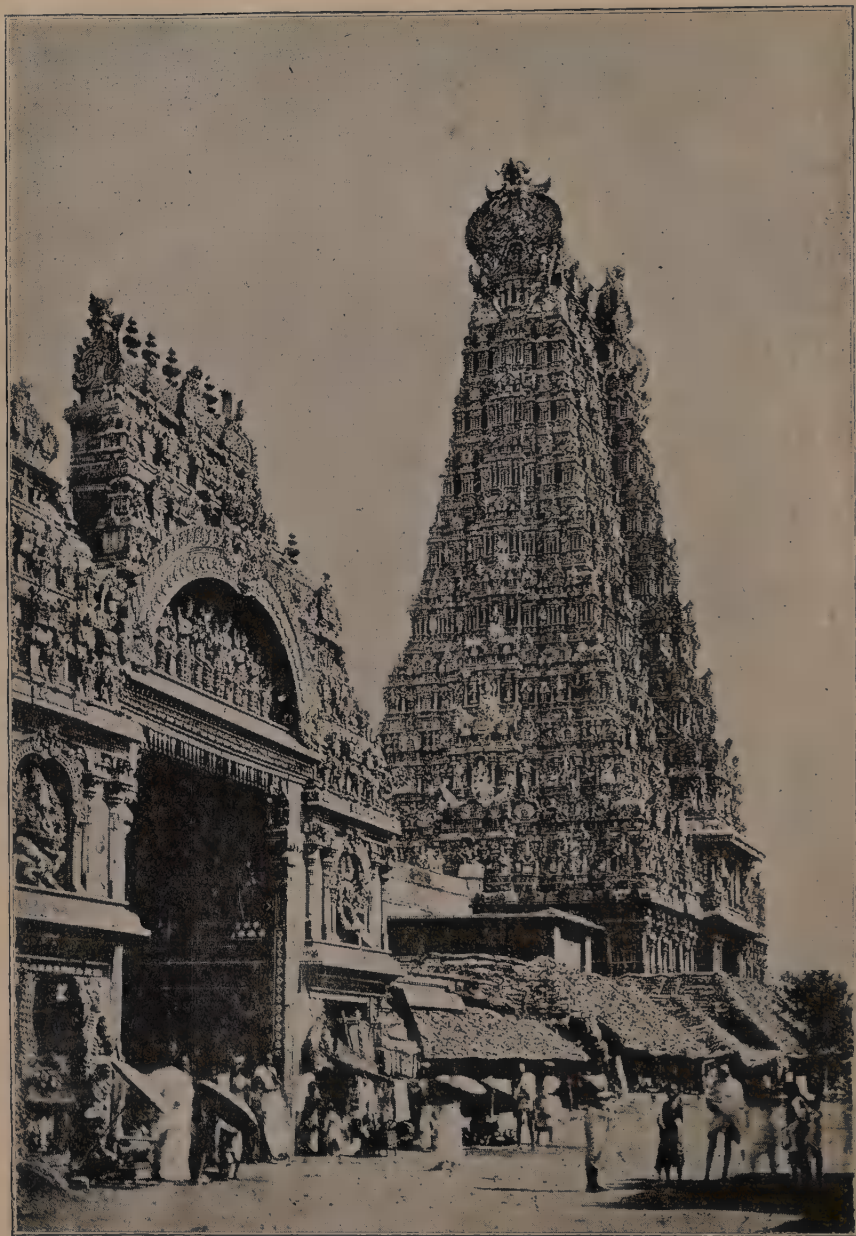
Of one of Xavier's tours from the sea coast into Madura, Strickland says, "He disappeared into the interior of the country for a week; and on his return, he said that those people were not yet fit for the kingdom of God,—nor was anything more ever known of his excursion into the Madura district." Xavier claimed to have made only one Brahman convert; and in his letters he does not claim to have worked miracles. That is a claim made for him by others. His own words about conversions are, "Of all people in India very few reach heaven, except those who die before they are fourteen years old, and so with baptismal innocence."

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\* Letters of Xavier.







MADURA SOKKANADAN TEMPLE

One of the best things Xavier did was the establishment of the College \* of St. Paul at Goa, for the purpose of forming an efficient auxiliary clergy. Under European superintendence this body became valuable and even indispensable in developing the church. With all his trials Xavier called his life a blessed life. He died December 2, 1552.

The Paravans† were tributary to the Nayaka king of Madura, and often visited his capital, either for **Parava Converts.** trade, or to pay tribute. This led the successors of Xavier to establish a mission in Madura in 1592 for the sake of the higher castes, the Vadugans. Father Gonsalve Fernandez was the head of this mission, and he was allowed by the Nayakar to build a church and presbytery in the city for the Paravans. He worked for fourteen years, and made not a single convert. This was owing to the people's horror of the Parangis, as they called Europeans. They feared the infamy of association with those who ate beef, and drank wine, and lived in the company of outcaste Pareians, and the consequent loss of their titles of nobility. About the same time the Jesuits, under Archbishop Menezes were labouring with considerable success in Malabar for the conversion of the Syrian Christians to the Roman Catholic Church. They established a second college and training school near Cochin, and also developed industrial settlements. This gave them a strong base of operations for all their missionary work in South India.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *De Nobili's Great Experiment.*

THE time was ripe for an extension of Jesuit missionary operations. Madura was the one place that loomed up above others in the south as worth the winning. It was not only the capital of the greatest of the Nayaka kingdoms and the seat of the great Sokkanadar temple; it was also the seat of learning and therefore the centre of Brahmanical influence. It had‡ ten thousand students and they were all Brahmans. They were distributed in classes of two to three hundred each; and for four or five years they were instructed in logic, and then in theology, or Vedantism,

\* W. Strickland.

† Laerzio, Nov. 20, 1609.

‡ De Nobili, Nov. 22, 1610.

and in five other courses. The emperor of Vijayanagar and the king of Madura had endowed the schools sufficiently for the pay of the masters and support of the students. Into this centre the Jesuits sought an entrance, and it only needed the man of commanding influence to commence the great work.

The man was not wanting. In 1606 there came to Madura from Malabar, in company with his superior, **Robert de Nobili.** Père Albert Laerzio,\* a priest "of high stature and majestic carriage,"† Robert de Nobili, nephew of Cardinal Bellarmine and relative of Pope Julius III. He was born in Tuscany in 1577, and entered the Society of Jesus at Naples. While he was still a novice, his master, the historian Orlandini, foretold that he would do much to promote the glory of God in India.

De Nobili, referring to the example of Paul, and the Eternal Word who became man to save man, said, "I also will make myself Indian to save the Indians."‡ With the approval of his superior, and the authorisation of the Archbishop of Cranganor, he presented himself to the Brahmans, protesting that he was neither Parangi, nor Portuguese, but a Roman raja, a sannyasi who had renounced the world and all its pleasures. He admitted to his service only Brahmans.§ Rice, milk, herbs and water once a day were all his nourishment. He wore a long robe of salmon-coloured linen covered with a surplice of the same colour, a white or red sash over his shoulders, a turban, and wooden sandals. For the threefold cord of the Brahmans || he substituted one with five strands, three of gold for the Trinity, and two of silver representing the soul and body of the adorable humanity. To this cord was suspended a cross. After a couple of years he discovered in the secret books of the Brahmans ¶ that as a sannyasi he was permitted to put away the sacred cord without detriment to his position. He had embraced the life of a munivar or sage. In one of his letters to the general he asked for "objects of piety, images, medals and beads."\*\*

With the adoption of the Brahmanical mode of life it was inevitable that de Nobili should separate himself **Separation from Fernandez.** from lower castes, including the Europeans, called Parangis, especially their leader Fernandez. He was aid-

\* Laerzio, Nov. 20, 1609.

† Proenza, 1660.

‡ Laerzio, Nov. 20, 1609.

§ *Id.*

|| *Id.*

¶ *Id.*, Nov. 25, 1611.

\*\* De Nobili, June 12, 1610.

ed in this plan by a gift of land in the Brahman quarter from the chieftain Erumeikatti.\* On this land he built a church and presbytery. He affected a mysterious solitude,† never leaving the house, and receiving visits only with extreme reserve; “the true method,” as his superior said, “of attracting all the world by curiosity.” To callers a disciple would say, “The father is not visible, he is praying, he is studying, he is meditating on the divine law.” Only after a long time, and at the second or third attempt, was a visitor admitted.

The father sat Indian fashion‡ on a platform two feet high covered with red cloth, while before him were spread a rug and a fine mat. All who entered saluted by raising the hands joined together above the head, and then lowering them with a profound bow. Those who wished to become disciples did this three times, then prostrated themselves, then stood. The father charmed all by his conversation,§ by the purity and perfection of his use of high Tamil, by reciting from memory passages from the most famous Indian authors, and by chanting a great number of poems with exquisite delicacy. His reputation soon spread|| through the city, and the Nayakar himself desired to see

#### His Fame.

him. But the father thought it not yet time to present himself; so the king was informed that he was absorbed in prayer and contemplation, and that he avoided going through the streets in order not to soil the purity of his eyes by meeting women; which gave a high idea of his chastity, a virtue said to have been admired rather than practised by the Indians of that day. He made a vow¶ to observe this mode of life to his latest breath.

De Nobili's knowledge of the books of the Hindus\*\* gave him great power. He found that they had four Vedas, or laws, of which they taught only three; the fourth was nearly lost, though in a measure combined with the other three. The lost Veda, he told them, was necessary for the salvation of the soul, but they had never found a man wise enough or holy enough to recover this lost law. He cited the very words of their sacred books†† to show that to save themselves they must listen to such a guru and learn the lost spiritual law, and thereby become his disciples. Their custom allowed each one to choose his own guru.

\* Laerzio, Nov. 20, 1609.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*

|| *Id.*

¶ *Id.*

\*\* De Nobili, Dec. 24, 1608.

†† *Id.*



It was not long before converts joined themselves to de Nobili\* and he was called upon to declare himself as to the degree of separation from their former practices necessary to entrance upon the Christian life. He did not hesitate to allow them to maintain most of their former customs. *Pongal*, being the cooking of new rice and milk and eating it solemnly, he allowed them to practise at the foot of the cross after he had blessed the new rice. They were likewise allowed† to rub sandal paste blessed by the priest upon the person, especially the forehead. He had received from the Archbishop of Cranganor both the permission to do this and the form of benediction. His justification of this course was: "By becoming a Christian one does not renounce his caste, nobility, or usages. The idea that Christianity interferes with them has been impressed upon the people by the devil, and is the great obstacle to Christianity. It is this that has stricken the work of Father Fernandez with sterility."‡

Both the missionaries and their converts were believed to have the power of driving devils out of people, and of bewitching them, and by magic securing the birth of children. When the king's treasurer, who had no heir, addressed himself to de Nobili, he gave the man a sentence on a gold leaf, which the man took home and attached to the neck of his spouse. He then came and received a prayer, learned the Roman Catholic ceremonies, and promised to get a vacation from the king in order to come under instruction. A yogi once stole a Christian's rosary and crucifix, and used them to exorcise his own son. Once a *satti* woman's parents in Trichinopoly tried to save her and her unborn child from her husband's funeral pyre.§ A catechist made her swallow some ashes that had been blessed, and, unknown to her, sprinkled some over her. The devil was believed thereby to have lost the power it had over her. At any rate she changed her mind about sharing her husband's death with him, and lived. The people attributed to one father the power to bewitch people by the ashes of little children that he was supposed to kill and burn.

At times the great and continuous heat of Madura|| would  
**Exhaustive** cause indisposition, especially as de Nobili's  
**Labours.** labours were in excess of his strength. The  
 tasks undertaken by him were (1) the ordinary exercises of

\* De Nobili, Jan. 15, 1609.

† *Id.*, April 22, 1609.

‡ *Id.*, June 7, 1609.

§ Proenza, 1659.

|| De Nobili, Apr. 22, 1609.



Jesuits; (2) the study of the Sanskrit and Telugu languages, and of the three Vedas; (3) the composition of a large catechism adapted to the people, for the use of his successors; (4) instruction to catechumens; (5) audiences to friends, or other visitors who came from curiosity.

De Nobili further extended his influence\* by sending letters to the chiefs of surrounding places. One letter was sent by the hand of a neophyte, George, to a prince of the Coimbatore region eighty miles away, and the prince replied most humbly. Another was sent by a messenger to the prince of Manamadura thirty miles south-east. He received the messenger with great honour, and subsequently, when visiting Madura to see the king, sent his ministers to see the sannyasi, though not himself calling on him.

The Brahman colleges of Madura† were making so much of Indian philosophy that, when a Christian community had been gathered, the Christians wanted de Nobili to teach that subject. But the instruction would have to be in Sanskrit, and, although he comprehended that language perfectly and spoke it with facility, he felt that a new course would require special study. Besides funds were wanting. Still with characteristic energy he set himself to study Sanskrit more profoundly in the hope of opening a college for Brahmans later on.

His first conquest was over an Indian guru,‡ who yielded after discussing with the father twenty days, four hours a day. He was baptized with the name Albert. Albert was famous for driving out devils, and his conversion was followed by that of many others of high birth and capacity, to whom he was a real apostle. Among the converts§ were a family of twenty Nayaks

**Conspicuous  
Converts.**

(the same caste as the king); two Nayak brothers, who were baptized with the names Alexis and Visuvasam; a Tottian (cultivator), related to the chief of all the Tottians, who was himself kept from baptism by fear of the king; a brother of the grand warden of the palace; and a prince, who undertook to bring a number of other princes tributary to himself. Some of his catechumens he could baptize after instructing them for fifteen or twenty days, but others had to wait longer. Among his earlier catechumens were a schoolmaster of the Vellala, or accountant caste, a chief related to Erumeikatti, and a wealthy and learned Brahman.

\* Laerzio, Nov. 20, 1609.

† De Nobili, 1610.

‡ Laerzio, Nov. 20, 1609.

§ *Id.*

Success was bound to bring persecution, and this was soon aroused. The chief pandaram,\* or mendicant priest, of the Hindus brought a police force from the palace to despoil the Christians. The latter in their zeal accepted the test of boiling butter. One young man offered to plunge his child into it. In the mean time all sorts of rumours were spread abroad about de Nobili. He was called a vile Parangi, a supernatural being, a munivar, or sage, come to destroy the idols. Some of the Hindu gurus† combined and accused him to the royal Nayakar of forbidding his disciples to rub on ashes, or to worship the gods Vishnu and Sokkanadar; all of which was true. Then the chief priest of the Sokkanadar temple and other Brahmans‡ held a council to learn why they did not have rain, and it was declared that the chief cause was de Nobili's presence. The chief had daily audience with the king, and these gurus persuaded a famous lame schoolmaster, a eunuch who was the king's secretary, and some of the nobles, to join in making complaint to the king. These framed the following accusations against de Nobili:—

- (1) He was an atheist.
- (2) He denied the existence of the Hindu triad, Vishnu, Brahma and Rudra.
- (3) He declared Sokkanadar, lord of fourteen worlds, to be nothing.
- (4) He affirmed the necessity of rejecting the lingam, or phallic emblem, in order to get rain.
- (5) He gathered a crowd of disciples, among them certain aged followers of the pandaram, and these would cause the certain ruin of Madura.
- (6) He was a Turk, who arrived dressed in black, like men of low condition; but he now called himself a raja, dressed in the salmon colour, and was served by Brahmans.
- (7) He had the audacity to learn the laws of the Brahmans.

His arguments helped him at times.§ One day five learned men called on him and discussed God and His attributes, causes, logic, argumentation, and the histories of their divinities. He boldly

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\* De Nobili, Dec. 24, 1608.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*, Dec. 31, 1608.

§ *Id.*, 1610.

told them the histories involved too many absurdities. They were satisfied that he was neither an atheist, nor a Parangi, and published abroad that he was a sannyasi, very noble and very learned, a spirit incarnate of their own deity, and that whoever should talk against him would merit severe chastisement. The chief pandaram had said that de Nobili spoke the truth of the gods, but that it was not good for him to do so.

Notwithstanding these movements in his favour,\* de Nobili's enemies threatened to seize his Brahman servants, cut off their top-knots, remove their sacred cords, and pluck out their eyes; and they all deserted him. A friendly Brahman fed him, but when a convert went to the Brahman protector on his behalf he called the father a Turk and a slave of the Portuguese and sent the convert back frightened. Even Fernandez† came and advised him to flee, as he had learned that the Brahmans had resolved to take away de Nobili's cord and salmon-coloured gown, and oblige him to dress in black. In spite of this general panic de Nobili's conscience obliged him to remain at his post.

He sent Alexis‡ to inform Erumeikatti, who came to see him at midnight attended by ten peons. De Nobili presented him with a spy-glass, and he promised to send other servants, and boasted that he would force the Brahmans to fall at the father's feet. He then took Alexis aside and told him to take good care of his master, he was so pale and thin. De Nobili only asked for a chance to meet the charges against him; but the chief soon made the opponents fear and tremble. He then asked the father to instruct him in his own house.

In December, 1608, Father Borges wrote from Cochin that they were all praying for the Christians in Madura; and in January, 1609, de Nobili wrote, "The tempest of the Brahmans has passed, but the pandaram is trying to raise another." In February two Brahmans, while discussing with de Nobili, insulted him in the presence of twenty others, then accused him before an assembly of eight hundred. He was defended§ by his Brahman munshi, or instructor, who spoke with a wit and cleverness and soundness that convinced the assembly. Erumeikatti used his influence on this occasion also; for he took the munshi aside and

\* De Nobili, Dec. 31, 1608.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*, Feb. 20, 1609.

asked him about de Nobili, and then said that if his accusers appeared again before him he would put them in irons.

This munshi\* first showed his friendliness to Christianity by substituting for his own cord another blessed by de Nobili and having a little cross. Although it was a crime for a Brahman to write a copy of the Vedas, and rendered him liable to have his eyes plucked out, this munshi secretly wrote them all out for the father. In June 1609, to the great joy of all the Christians, he was baptized. He afterwards admitted† that he had been jealous of de Nobili's reputation, and had offered himself as his munshi in order to convert him to Hinduism; he had no idea that any one in the world could resist his knowledge or the subtlety of his arguments. After this the Brahmans tried to force the munshi to be present at their sacrifices, but he boldly refused, and they excommunicated him.

At this time the church‡ was too small for the congregation, although it had once been enlarged. Erumeikatti§ presented de Nobili with a new site, and the news, spreading through all the city, raised a tempest of twelve days. The Brahmans went to the Brahman chief of the Sokkanadar temple with exaggerated reports of the number of Christians. He became furious and declared that the site given away was the property of the pagoda. He also accused de Nobili of being a Parangi and of eating with the Parangi priest (Fernandez). He also came proudly before the "ayyer" (spiritual father) without saluting him, and then left noisily and threateningly. De Nobili sent Alexis with the message, "If he prove me to be a Parangi, let my eyes be plucked out; if not, his eyes shall be plucked out." He further declared that he would not occupy land defiled by the idol, and offered money to pay for the site given him. This assuaged the wrath of the great Brahman, who took 15 piastres, and promised his friendship, saying, "If I am for you, who will be against you?"

In 1610 a new church was half finished.|| It was built of brick with flat roof, including three naves with columns of black granite. The interior was very elegant, and suited to excite devotion.

Another need was that of a companion to share with de Nobili his arduous labours. In his appeal to the Archbishop of

\* De Nobili, April 22, 1609.

† Leitan, Sept. 26, 1609.

‡ De Nobili, April 22, 1609.

§ Leitan, Nov. 20, 1609.

|| Laerzio, Dec. 8, 1610.

Cranganor for such an assistant, he declared that he could not endure\* the work of baptizing all applicants; that he did not consider it wise to baptize candidates without having tried them for a long time and instructed them profoundly in all the truths of the faith; that the Christians were the kernel of the Christianity he wished to establish; and that he had no repose either day or night. So he asked as a companion "one who desires to suffer."†

In order to secure and conduct to Madura‡ any assistant that might be appointed, de Nobili sent two Christian delegates to Cochin. He was glad to have them see Cochin; and they were indeed astonished at the size and good order of the college, the beauty of the church, and the pomp of its ceremonies, as well as the multitude and fervour of the Cochin Christians. After a stay of twelve days§ the two delegates started home without any companion for their master; but Father Leitan, who was in charge of the neophytes at Cochin, was so "pierced," as he said, "with desire to go to Father Robert," that finally he was sent.

The evening|| before his departure Leitan robed himself in the costume of de Nobili Ayyer. He and his  
**Leitan's Journey.** two Madura companions were accompanied twenty-four miles up a river on the 16th August. Thence he travelled with them on foot, refusing every conveyance. The journey to Madura took ten days, as they climbed steep mountains in the rain, crossed impetuous torrents, and then traversed the heated plains of Madura. He suffered from the bad roads, cool nights, hot days, loss of sleep, and the danger and fear of tigers and wild elephants.

At last, on the 26th day of the month,¶ an hour after sunset, he reached the city, which he described as a terrestrial paradise. Passing crowds of pagans, he was met by Alexis and Visuvasam. He found the church very poor. Father Robert\*\* met him without ceremony. The converted munshi called on him and remarked that he resembled certain Brahmans in complexion. It was time to sup. The disciples spread the meal. A plantain leaf on the ground was table, table-cloth, platters and plates. The Brahman cook placed the supper. Leitan felt such disgust at eating such food in this way that he had to force himself to eat. Within a

\* De Nobili, 1610.

† *Id.*, June 7, 1609.

‡ Laerzio, Nov. 20, 1609.

§ *Id.*, Dec. 24, 1608.

¶ *Id.*

|| Leitan, Sept. 26, 1609.

\*\* *Id.*



year he left the mission\* on account of his health, the difficulty of learning the high language, and his inability to accommodate himself to the father's mode of life.

Another assistant was soon found in Antonio Vico, professor of theology at Cochin. Starting on the 6th September, 1610, he did not reach Madura until

September 15th, owing to continual rains and torrents on the steep, intervening mountains. Unlike Leitan, Vico had no difficulty with the régime, and de Nobili was well satisfied with him and his progress in acquiring the Tamil language.† He in turn considered Father Robert an ideal missionary, and wrote admiringly of his "consummate knowledge, suppleness of talent, fecund eloquence, art capable of embellishing things the most serious, and power of persuasion." From May 22nd, 1611, de Nobili left the work of writing reports to Vico.‡

The year 1610§ was said to be "rich in persecutions." The assembling in Madura of Parava and other low caste Christians from surrounding regions excited continual opposition. And the first storm was aroused by a Parava Christian from the coast, who mysteriously announced to the Christians of Madura that by baptism they had fallen from their caste to that of the Parangis and Paravans; for the sake of which result he declared that de Nobili had put salt in their mouth and performed other ceremonies. He also declared that de Nobili himself was a Parangi.

The Christians|| were thrown into consternation; they preferred death to the dishonour of being called Parangis; for in the eyes of the people generally a Parangi was a gross, ignorant person, incapable of any learning, especially philosophy. Fourteen Christians ceased to come to church; when called, they would come to the outside and shout that they would not associate with Parangis. The majority of the Christians were faithful, but suffered ignominy, and new converts ceased.

Like Job ¶ de Nobili protested his innocence by a sacred oath. Calling himself the "royal penitent," he wrote on a palm leaf that some were spreading black calumnies against him, and continued, "I am not a Parangi, and was not born on their soil, nor am I allied to their race. I was born in Rome; my family are of the rank of

**De Nobili's Oath  
of clearing.**

\* De Nobili, June 12, 1610.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

† Laerzio, Nov. 25, 1611.

§ *Id.*, Dec. 8, 1610.

¶ *Id.*



noble rajas in this country. The holy, spiritual law does not oblige a man to renounce his caste. He, who says this law is peculiar to Paravans or Parangis, lies." This oath was posted on the trunk of a great tree near de Nobili's house, and brought peace to the Christians; and the seceders all returned.

Once Alexis\* wished to renounce the world the better to assure his salvation; but the father dissuaded him on the ground that he had too ardent an imagination and was too overbearing in disposition. These traits were soon manifested in his action when a theft occurred. He used to wear ornaments of gold and jewels worth 160 rupees, and fine cloths, all of which made him vain. Upon losing by theft 60 rupees, two pendants, a ruby, and two rings, he had an innocent neighbour seized and tortured. This was his first fall. Distracted by this error he fell into another; he sought an idolatrous diviner to practise divination for him. The father forbade him to set foot in the church until he should atone for his scandalous conduct.

Sleepless through the following night, he decided† that the only thing to do was to abjure all his jewels and fine cloths and give up baths, and ask the father's pardon. So the next morning, after talking with the father, he ran to the church, seized an image of the Virgin and prayed to it, and then fell at de Nobili's feet. To keep out of hell he offered all his jewels, his gold, and all he possessed, for the construction of a new church. He would have no house but the church for himself; and would need only a rag and a handful of rice each day for the rest of his life. De Nobili objected that he would not continue, but finally yielded. The relatives of Alexis were greatly disturbed at his resolution, but could not dissuade him. His mother threatened to kill herself, threw herself at his feet, and pleaded with him, but he calmed her. On the following sabbath in the church he flung his jewels to the ground and kicked them away from him, and then took the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, giving all his goods to the church. De Nobili forthwith ordered him to go a-begging in his best robes, but soon after recalled him. The Christians were profoundly affected, and, when he took his vows, the church resounded with groans. Subsequently‡ Alexis spent five years in the service of a noble in Cochin, and courageously refused to

\* De Nobili, July 19, 1609.

† *Id.*

‡ Vico, Nov., 1622.

participate in the idolatrous ceremonies of the houses of the great. He died in 1622.

De Nobili owed his place in the Brahman quarter of Madura to Erumeikatti, and at various times was protected by him, though he also suffered much at his hands. Once, when starting on a perilous expedition by order of the Nayakar, the chief first visited the father\* to bid him farewell. De Nobili gave him a medal on his right arm together with a cross. Erumeikatti then prostrated himself at the father's feet, declared himself his follower, commended his son to the father's care, and asked him to send daily to his son sandal paste as a preservative against the devil.† When the chief returned victorious from the war, covered with honours by the great Nayakar, he demanded baptism without instruction; but de Nobili refused because of the opposition that would come from the king. And de Nobili was wise, for it was not long before the chief,‡ under the influence of the king, sent two messengers to the father expressing surprise that he, a Parangi, should live on his property and build a church there. A captain came with orders to tear down the church and house, and bring Alexis to the chief. The father boldly expressed his indignation, and refused to give up Alexis though he should lose his own head. One of the messengers, a prince, said, "There is a true sannyasi, I recognise him by his words." Erumeikatti yielded and then denied that he did anything but demand Alexis.

Soon after Erumeikatti§ alienated the ground he had promised for enlarging the church, and himself built barracks on land next to that where Christians used to congregate. He then sent to the ayyer, as he called de Nobili, a minister with three demands, *viz.*, (1) that he should put away his Brahman servants; (2) that he should submit to interrogation about his teaching in the presence of the great Nayakar; (3) that he should bring testimony in writing about his faith and doctrine.

De Nobili refused the first demand|| because it implied suspicion, and suspicion was an insult to a man of his rank, and because it was beneath his rank to be served by any other than Brahmans. He was willing to appear before the Nayakar and furnish a written statement. The secret of this change of attitude on Erumeikatti's part was that he had been reproached by a lord for keeping a Parangi in his quarters.

\* Leitan, Nov. 20, 1609.

† De Nobili 1610.

‡ Vico, Nov. 23, 1610.

§ Laerzio, Nov. 25, 1611.

|| *Id.*

The tables were soon turned, for one day at the instigation of a courtier, \* the Nayakar demanded of **The Tables turned.** Erumeikatti the cession of his quarters. The chief pretended to acquiesce, but said he had ceded them to a Brahman sannyasi and his disciples. The king, not knowing that the sannyasi was de Nobili, withdrew his demand rather than commit a breach of faith with such a sacred person as a sannyasi. In this way de Nobili's presence saved to Erumeikatti his possessions, made him appreciate de Nobili, and restored the Christians to his good graces.

Persecution now ceased from without, but it came forth from within. De Nobili's work was arrested by a summons from his superior, and he had to suspend it for ten years.† **Persecution from within.** Fernandez‡ lived with the Paravans, exposed to the scorn of the Indians, and, as de Nobili put it, condemned to a desolate sterility in his work in Madura. He was not flattered to see his brother Italian disavow his connection with the Parangis. He could not know what was happening in de Nobili's church, except through the despised Paravans, and was continually beset by their prejudiced reports. He did not know Sanskrit, and the Brahmins that helped him were supposed to have been coached by his Paravans. He took his revenge by notifying his superiors that de Nobili was spoiled by paganism.

Father Laerzio, the provincial of Malabar, had accompanied de Nobili when he first came to Madura, and had visited him a second time; he had also left with him 144 rupees for the support of his work and the purchase of land. He and the Archbishop of Cranganor now supported de Nobili as against Fernandez. But when Laerzio§ was replaced by Perez as provincial, Fernandez resumed his charges in a voluminous "memoir." The fathers all declared against de Nobili; so the archbishop summoned him to Cochin to appear before the synod. De Nobili satisfied all of them except one Pimenta.

The case was carried to the Archbishop of Goa. He too could not resist the reasoning of de Nobili, and expressed the wish that he should have imitators rather than detractors.||

Fernandez, encouraged by Pimenta,¶ continued to write. He represented de Nobili as having invented a new religion, a

\* Vico, Aug. 30, 1611.

§ *Id.*

† *Id.*, Oct. 25, 1610.

|| *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

¶ *Id.*

monstrous mixture of Christianity and idolatry, and of having abjured the faith by burning incense to idols. De Nobili's superiors advised him to wait for an answer from Rome, which was already disturbed. Cardinal Bellarmine,\* among others, was alarmed, and soon a letter came from him calling upon de Nobili to abstain from his work. When the father saw his own friends, relatives and superiors thus turning against him he agreed to suspend his work, and demanded permission to proceed to Goa and defend himself, but Pimenta refused. This was in 1613.

Two years after he wrote † from Cochin to Bellarmine and satisfied him. In 1616 the father general, **Encouragement.** Menezes, wrote from Goa encouraging him, and allowing him to start his work again, but exhorting him to keep the Christians from superstition. But that very year Menezes was recalled to Portugal, and de Nobili's adversaries accused him again before the new primate. Palmerio, the visiting father, therefore summoned de Nobili to Goa to receive sentence. At Cochin‡ one of de Nobili's converts, Boniface, had made a deposition reflecting on his morals and doctrines. These accusations were sent to Rome by companions of Fernandez, and de Nobili was summoned to answer them before the college of Cranganor. On top of this came the summons of Palmerio from Goa.

In writing his defence§ de Nobili claimed to have acquired an exact knowledge of Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit, and therefore to be able to search out all the secrets of Hinduism. The following are the chief points of his defence:—

**De Nobili's defence.** As to titles—He had assumed the titles, *Guru*, *Sannyasi*, *Ayyer*, and *Raja*. *Guru* was a Sanskrit word meaning “he who makes clear the explanation of things.” *Sannyasi* meant “he who has renounced all things.” *Ayyer* meant “master of the house.” *Raja* was a name of nobility. All four properly belonged to him.

The Christians|| and fathers were all disciples for their own safety. A disciple had not the right to discuss; a master had the obligation to do so. Demonstrations of veneration were necessary.

He disavowed the name “Parangi,” because with the people that term signified a race of men vile, with neither virtue nor shame, given to excess of wine and to feasting on unclean flesh.

\* Vico.

† *Id.*‡ *Id.*§ *Id.*|| *Id.*

The Indians first gave this name to half-castes and Jewish merchants. If they met a European they called him "Parangi." The council of the great Nayakar had decided that Parangis were the vilest of the people, and when Fernandez was introduced to the Nayakar he was sent away as not worthy of such honour. Women would run away before Fernandez, saying that Parangis fried children to eat them. The Portuguese were very impudent in calling Christianity "Parangi-markam (way)," for that implied that converts joined the Parangi caste. The Paravans themselves did not admit the out-caste Pareians into their church.

The signs he used were not primarily superstitious nor religious. The *kudumi*, or tuft of hair, was a sign of caste. The Hindu smriti, or law, declared it to be necessary for a Brahman in his first or third year, and forbade it to other castes. It was to be worn, according to the divisions of the Brahmans, at the occiput, towards the front, towards the left, or the right. It was not regarded as idolatrous. An excommunicated Brahman lost it. Sannyasis dispensed with it. The superstitious ceremonies employed in giving it to children affected the manner, not the substance.

#### Usages and Emblems.

The *cord* he defended by the same reasoning. It required three threads of cotton for the Brahman boy at eight, linen for a prince at eleven, and hemp for a merchant's son at twelve years of age. It pertained to civil life, and was a sign of caste. When a Brahman married, another thread was added, with a cloth; at fifteen a fifth, with a fine cloth for his shoulders; a sixth at thirty, and one for each ten years thereafter. This affected only social position, and was not sacerdotal; for many Brahmans were not priests, but all had the cord. Kings could not exercise royal functions without the cord.

*Sandal paste* was used because a bare forehead was humiliating and uncivilised. No one would appear so before a prince, any more than in Europe one would appear barefooted. Neophytes should not adorn themselves with any signs of idols or sects. But sandal was neither superstitious nor improper. Various books declared that sandal and similar things should decorate the body. It was the best adornment, its usage was common to all sects, and all abstained from it in mourning. The figure of sandal paste for himself was the square, as implying knowledge of *gnanam*, or wisdom. Christians put on the figure of the oval. He prohibited all ashes and other powders consecrated to idols.



*Baths* had nothing in common with religion. He never taught that bathing was meritorious, nor to be practised at fixed hours.

He quoted the examples of Peter and Paul, the feast of the Calends, which was once prohibited and then established, the Saturnalia, which were not prohibited, though changed in object. It was rather another scruple they should have—that of hindering the work by excess of severity. This memorial contained more than fifty pages.

In the mean time in Madura \* Vico had received orders to inquire into the conduct of de Nobili, and had found him innocent of anything wrong. He sent to Goa a detailed memorial, in which to de Nobili's arguments he added a eulogy of his marvellous insight, which he attributed to superhuman influence.

De Nobili finished his memorial † and set out from Cochin for Goa in company with the Archbishop of Cranganor. There he was received coldly by the visiting father. Palmerio promised to read over the memorial, and did so with astonishment. Running to the chamber of de Nobili, he avowed himself to be fully convinced, and apologized for his previous attitude. He then communicated the memorial to all the fathers of Goa. Of the two inquisitors, one was convinced, but the other would not read the memorial.

The primate ‡ would hear nothing of this discussion, and some of the canons and priests sided with him. Declaring discussion to be useless, he condemned the "rites" as causing needless trouble, and overwhelmed de Nobili with insults. The friendly inquisitor rebuked the primate's frivolity, saying that a profound investigation had convinced him of the justice of de Nobili's cause. The fathers of the Jesuits turned in favour of de Nobili.

The result was that the primate was disconcerted and did not dare to condemn de Nobili, but took suffrages for sending him to Rome. It appears that he was not sent. Meantime both parties sent written statements to Rome. The friendly inquisitor, Almeda, sent to Bellarmine, with his statement, the testimony of 108 leading Brahmans of Madura. De Nobili composed a new memorial to the Pope and committed it to his brother Mogur Nobili.

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\* Vico.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*



On his return to Madura \* by way of Cochin, after an absence of two years, he was received with joy by Vico and the neophytes. Even Boniface and other backsliders prostrated themselves before him. Boniface also went to Cranganor and retracted his charges, and his retraction was sent to Rome.

Gregory XV.† ended the whole matter by his bull of 31st January, 1623. He vindicated the course of de Nobili, saying, "Brahmans are kept from confession of Christ by difficulties about the cord and the kudumi. Desiring to procure the conversion of these nations, after suitable discussion we accord to the Brahmans and other Gentiles the cord and kudumi, sandal paste and purification of the body. These should not be received in idol temples, but only from priests after they have blessed them."

**Vindication of  
de Nobili.**

This great controversy ‡ was more fatal than all persecutions. From 1624 the mission changed its face. There was extension in other directions, but a great blow had been given to the winning of Brahmans, and the mission could not repair its losses. Vico had calmed the Christians by rich presents from Cochin, but persecution started up again, and many backslid. Some followed the court to Trichinopoly, others died of famine, or emigrated to escape famine.

Madura lost its political supremacy in 1623, because Tirumala Nayakar came to the throne and immediately removed his court to Trichinopoly, and everywhere confusion reigned owing to the wars in which he was involved. Subsequently he made Madura his capital, having built his vast palace and enlarged the temple in that city. But in the interval de Nobili's prestige and influence and work were shattered.

And so, between the jealousy of Fernandez in particular and the Dominicans in general, the political decline of Madura, and the inherent weakness of his plan, de Nobili's great experiment failed. It was not without great and far-reaching results; but as a means of the conversion of the Brahmans, and through them of the great Nayakar kingdoms, it was a failure.

The disputes between the Jesuits and other orders continued as long as the Madura Mission lasted, and Pope after Pope was constrained to issue bulls and briefs against the "rites" both in Malabar and China, as well as Madura. In 1703, Clement XI.

\* Vico.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

sent de Tournon, patriarch of Antioch, as apostolic visitor and legate *a latere* with full powers to investigate and settle on the spot all matters pertaining to these rites. He seems to have thought that the Jesuits were wily and that he must oppose wiles to wiles, by setting snares to entrap them into statements incriminating themselves. His decree was published in 1704, and was a general condemnation of the betrothal and nuptial ceremonies, the use of various symbols, and other practices, all of which the Christians had retained after taking the Christian name. It was a settlement that failed to settle, for the Jesuits ignored the decree as far as possible because of their position, established by de Nobili and confirmed by Gregory XV., that many of these things might be usefully continued as Christian practices dis severed from idolatry.

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## CHAPTER II.

### *De Nobili as a Pilgrim.*

IN June, 1623, de Nobili felt that he could no longer stay in Madura,\* so took the staff of a pilgrim and set forth with the intention of planting in all the territory of India the divine tree of the Gospel, thus establishing new centres of light and places of refuge. Maintaining his character as a sannyasi, he travelled northward through Trichinopoly and beyond to Sendamangalam,† the capital of a tributary king. He made his entry into the place with one Brahman carrying his breviary, another his umbrella, a third a tiger-skin, a fourth a vase containing holy water, and a fifth perfumed water to sprinkle the place of reception. The king ‡ sat on a platform against the wall. The sannyasi was imperturbable amidst great excitement. Three or four men spread the tiger-skin, and the sannyasi sat on it with crossed legs, while the king seated himself beside him. The king even prostrated himself. He proposed to give de Nobili a site for a church and presbytery, but after prayer the sannyasi decided first to establish a church in Salem. So he left with a promise to return soon.

Salem was the capital of another tributary king. It was 90 miles from Trichinopoly and 180 from Madura.§  
 De Nobili found it "a cruel and inhospitable shore." He knocked at all doors, was refused by rich and poor

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\* Vico, 1624.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*

alike, and was obliged to take shelter outside the town in \*a building open to all the winds, its roof being supported by four columns. Here he passed forty days and nights and contracted a very painful malady; and then learned that all had been deceived by false reports about him. At last one of the important men\* of the place was moved by compassionate generosity and offered him an asylum in his own house. This changed the whole situation. Crowds came to dispute with him. The elder brother of the Sendamangalam king, who had despoiled and persecuted him, now became a disciple. He also confided to the sannyasi the education of his four sons, and distributed sentences of Scripture on leaves of gold.

The king of Salem† was attracted and wished to see "Father Robert." So he paid him a visit and was received in the presence of a crowd of Brahmans. A discussion followed on the end of the soul, in which the father appealed to the good sense of the king against their pantheistic doctrines. The king could not contain his emotion, and said, "Sannyasi, the victory is yours." He then conducted him to his own private apartments, questioned him for about two hours, and ended up by telling him to ask all he wished. De Nobili's reply was, "Grant me your friendship." Pleased with this request, the king assigned him a house in the finest quarter of the town, the Brahman quarter.

Two strangers‡ came along promising to change iron into silver and copper into gold. De Nobili put them to confusion and promised the king a better alchemy, *viz.*, to transform poor mortals into the image of God, an alchemy especially important for kings.

The Brahmans§ resented the kindness shown by the king, and made the name "Parangi" resound throughout the city, proclaiming that the priest had been ignominiously driven out of Madura. Converts begged de Nobili to flee, but he refused. When the Brahmans went in a crowd to the palace and begged the king to expel him, he repressed them, saying, "Do you dare insult a man whom I honour?"

When the work|| was well established in Salem, de Nobili was summoned to Cochin by the father superior and archbishop. By 1625, he was back again with Father Martinz, who afterward carried on the work in this region. Twenty-four miles from Salem, in a place called Mora-

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\* Vico, 1624.

§ *Id.*

† *Id.*

|| *Id.*, 1625.

‡ *Id.*

mangalam, a petty king was involved with his fellow princes in various intrigues against the king of Salem, and in one way or another de Nobili was involved in their struggles. One of them would write to the father demanding baptism; then the Brahmans would influence the king of Sendamangalam to promise him the succession to that kingdom if he would not become a Christian; the result would be that by the time the father arrived he would be met by "desolating coldness,"\* and he would have to retire to an open rest-house. Then one of the princes would take him to his palace and let his family receive baptism and promise to apply himself in case he should receive his estate.

Before the king of Moramangalam † went to war with the king of Salem, de Nobili secured for him from the father provincial a rich banner with a cross on one side and on the reverse the legend, *In hoc signo vinces*, in Sanskrit.

De Nobili ‡ visited a band of eighty catechumens in another place. They were the disciples of a very learned Pareian, who had been convinced of the truth of Christianity by a book, and had thrown away his lingam and been baptized by the name Hilary. Thus de Nobili did not overlook the Pareians and others of low caste. He tried to inculcate that religion was one, as opposed to civil distinctions of caste. Many had been converted in Madura and several hundreds in Trichinopoly. But the missionaries had to work among them secretly.

In 1627 Vico§ was so ill at Madura that de Nobili left Martinz  
**Return to Trichi-** at Moramangalam and started for Madura with  
**nopoly.** little hope of seeing Vico alive. But at Trichinopoly he learned that he was convalescent, so stopped there to help the neophytes. He procured a house and arranged a chapel and baptized sixteen converts. Among them|| was a Kammalan, a mechanic, who disputed eloquently. Early one morning an officer took this Kammalan aside and asked where he learned all this; he brought the officer to de Nobili. Then the officer wished for baptism, but was told he must wait at least thirty-five or forty days.

The methods of de Nobili¶ are illustrated by his instructions  
**De Nobili's** to this Kammalan. He warned him against  
**Instructions.** those who wanted to begin by "roaring against the pagodas," and said, "To attack from the front would be to close all doors of access; not because these false idols were not

\* Vico, 1625.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

§ De Nobili, 1627.

|| *Id.*

¶ *Id.*

worthy of all opprobrium, but for the sake of the salvation of souls. When we chase shadows from a room, we do not make a stir with a broom."

Erumeikatti was in Trichinopoly\* at this time; and one night his secretary was troubled with the question whether there existed any ruler whose dominion did not sooner or later slip away from him, as the potter lost his dominion by selling his pot, the merchant by disposing of his goods, and the king by being defeated in battle. Before daylight he ran to that same Kammalan and was taken to de Nobili. The latter told him it was a voice to come to the true God. He was a worshipper of Rudra, and forthwith threw his idols down a well.

Pandarams came one day† and argued with de Nobili three or four hours, for the sake of controversy. **Controversy with Pandarams.** They used all the subtleties of philosophy, the unity of God, His figure, free-will, fore-knowledge, goodness, why He gave man an inclination to sin, etc. De Nobili's custom was to explain dogmas only to those who came for the truth, whereas these he considered enemies of the truth. So he freed himself from them, and the next day refused to see them.

Several of the succeeding years,‡ especially the year 1630, were years of persecution, and seriously affected the work in Trichinopoly. Most of the neophytes were poor, and lived by hard toil. In the evenings they would run to the church and take time from sleep for orisons. One cause of persecution§ was the conversion of a famous pandaram who had the insignia of greatness, viz., the umbrella, servants, and even horses. After conversion he absented himself for a year, but no sooner had he showed himself again on the street than he was asked what he had done with his lingam. On replying that he had repudiated it, the leading pandaram and other idolaters fell upon him and beat him. "Strike still harder!" said he. They would have killed him but for spectators, who interfered after the pandaram had broken his stick to pieces on him.

By blessing a Brahman lord's palace, and attaching a sentence of Scripture to the arms of the inmates, **In Madura.** de Nobili was supposed to have driven out an evil spirit, and this gained for him favour at the court of the

\* De Nobili, 1627.

† Vico, 1632.

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*



Nayakar. The year 1638 \* found de Nobili again at Madura with Vico. At that time a woman of the shepherd caste near Madura was cured by de Nobili from some malady after trying to poison herself. This cure brought her and her husband and then others to the acceptance of Christianity, and that place became a centre of neophytes. Among other converts baptized by de Nobili† at this time were a dancing master, who gave up his livelihood; two of the dancing girls taught by that master, who gave up their jewels and their profession; and a yogi who removed his sacred beads.

The first missionary ‡ to be buried in Madura was Vico, who died in October 1638, after having worked twenty-eight years. At this time de Nobili's sight was too dim for him to write with his own hand. He had already sent a letter to Vitteleschi, father provincial in Cochin, asking for five new missionaries; and when Vico died, in spite§ of his blindness and grave indisposition, he went himself to Cochin to excite the zeal of his brethren. He was successful, because for thirty-two years he had done such a work that all their hearts were inflamed with a desire to go and work in his mission.

De Nobili had hardly returned|| to Madura with his reinforcements before orders were given by the government to arrest the fathers both in Trichinopoly and Madura. A neophyte warned those in Madura, but de Nobili and Maya were seized and held at the entrance to the mission premises, while 300 soldiers pilaged the church and presbytery. The officer who made the arrest¶ wore sandals with silver buttons, and bracelets and necklace of gold, and was dressed in fine cloths. He sat on a rich carpet and gave his orders chewing betel. They placed before him various articles plundered, but not those of value.

Blind old de Nobili invoked the anger of heaven\*\* and strove to arouse the superstitious fears of his persecutors. But the fathers were exposed to the sun till night, when they and three Brahman attendants were taken to prison. Here they were kept for seventeen days without any change of clothes or water to wash with, their only food being a handful of rice poorly cooked. The Brahmans were tortured to make them reveal treasures supposed to be in concealment. One relief they had in having no irons

**Sufferings in  
Confinement.**

\* Martinz, 1638.

† *Id.*

‡ De Nobili, Oct. 18, 1638.

§ Rubino, 1638.

|| Maya, 1640.

¶ *Id.*

\*\* *Id.*



on their feet. De Nobili did not, however, cease to proclaim the Gospel. The Hindus thought him a sorcerer, and denied to him all communication with his neophytes. The great Nayakar had taken up his residence in Madura, and at this time intended to come and kill de Nobili with his own hand. The father, despoiled of everything, slept peacefully, had good health, and spent his time studying Sanskrit and high Tamil.

Before the year was out Father Martinz wrote from Trichinopoly that divine providence had chained the winds of persecution, and that whole families were being converted. Some of the new converts were said to "live like angels." The winds of persecution were unchained again in the year 1640 and several succeeding years. Father Maya\* wrote from the Madura prison to the provincial of Malabar, only by securing paper and ink from the prison guard. Even in the intervals when out of prison the missionaries could not return to their church, but had to live and worship in incommo-  
dious huts. The older de Nobili grew the more he added to the austerity of his life. He employed his time† composing various works useful to the mission. For instance, to replace the wailing chants of widows, he composed laments on the Passion, the desolation of the Holy Mother, the fall of the angels, Adam, the evils in chastisements, etc. These were taught to Christian widows, and thus he tried to protect the neophytes from the unclean language of heathen songs. He left many other and important works in palm-leaf books.

In 1644 de Nobili and three other priests had a council in Madura and decided to visit the Nayakar. First they addressed a favourite eunuch and showed him a small organ. On receiving a favourable response from the eunuch, they sent word about their situation to the father provincial at Cochin, and he sent them an organist.

When the organist arrived‡ they took him with them and called on the Nayakar. He received them kindly, and made de Nobili speak in the three languages, Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit. De Nobili improved the opportunity to tell of their tribulations, when the Nayakar demanded of him the names of the hostile lords; but the astute father excused himself by appealing to the requirements of his holy law. The Nayakar§ then authorised them to live in his domain and preach, ordered restoration

\* Maya, 1644.

† Da Costa, 1644.

‡ *Id.*§ *Id.*

of all they had lost, expressed a desire to see them at his court once a month, and made known his wish to keep the organist with him. He then dismissed them, after putting on them the long tissue veil of honour.

The council of priests \* was met by a council of pandarams who had determined to make another attempt on de Nobili's life, and had a meeting to decide the manner of his death. They agreed to use magic, and forthwith summoned the most famous magician in the kingdom. Every one † knew of it, and when the day came the magician presented himself, followed by a crowd all alert to witness the vengeance of their gods. He insolently arranged his apparatus, then traced figures in the sand, and circles in the air. De Nobili regarded him with composure. Soon the ceremonies became more noisy; his features became discomposed, his eyes inflamed, his face contracted like that of one possessed; he ground his teeth, howled, struck the ground with his feet, hands, and forehead. De Nobili asked what comedy he pretended to play. Then he recited magical sentences. The father begged him to spare his throat. The magician said, "You have laughed, now die!" and threw a black powder into the air, at the same time looking at his victim to see him fall at his feet; and then turned and fled from the jeers of the crowd. De Nobili utilised his advantage to address the crowd; and from that time they regarded him as more than human.

De Nobili lingered on for years after his active life ceased. In 1648 he was sent to ‡ Jaffnapatam and made superior of the Ceylon Mission, but was too feeble and blind for any work, and the provincial sent him to Mylapore, near Madras. Four Brahmans § accompanied him as amanuenses. They called him "Holy Father," and would carry him to church in their arms. He || built himself a little cabin of earth outside the citadel, where he lived with his four Brahmans. Rice, butter and milk were interdicted, and he reduced his daily food to a single meal of bitter herbs cooked in water and seasoned with salt and spice. The doctors also interdicted light and too much air, so he stayed in his cabin, where he became entirely blind. Even then he continued

**Council of  
Pandarams.**

**Last Days of  
de Nobili.**

\* Da Costa, 1644.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*, 1648.

§ Proenza, 1660.

|| *Id.*

dictating compositions to the Brahmans. But his mind would wander in his devotions.

One day certain idolaters, exasperated\* by imprudent jests of Christians, chased them to de Nobili's retreat, and so discovered it. Portuguese soldiers reported his danger and he was moved to the quarters of the other Christians within the protection of the fortress. He barely survived the removal, and his last recorded words were addressed to the cabin. "Farewell, dear cabin," he said; "they wish that I should leave you because you are not a safe asylum; but I say that you shall be erect and intact beside the ruins of this town and fortress, whose walls shall be overthrown, and whose stones shall be scattered." In confirmation of this prophecy† it is recorded that the French of Pondicherry drove the Portuguese out of Mylapore, and were in turn driven out by the Sultan of Golconda, the ally of the Portuguese; that then the Portuguese, fearing the return of the French, razed the walls and took the stones into the country, leaving only the little cabin.

De Nobili was the greatest missionary to India of his century, and impressed upon the Madura Mission certain lasting features. One was the adaptation of the life of the missionary to that of the people. Another was the appropriation of harmless customs and ceremonies for Christian use. A third was the thorough study of the vernaculars with a view to fluency of speech and writing, and accurate knowledge of the literature of the people.

**De Nobili's  
Greatness.**

### CHAPTER III.

#### *Organization and Results.*

THE Madura Mission was founded by de Nobili; and its early history was largely moulded by his great personal influence. But he represented the Society of Jesus, and that body was too broad in its purposes and too astute in its operations to allow its work to depend on any one man. So that when the founder of the mission became blind and feeble his work was already being maintained by a group of priests pushing out in all directions through territory now represented by the vicariates apostolic of Madura, Pondicherry, Coimbatore, Mysore and Madras.

\* Proenza, 1660.

† *Id.*

Each father had the oversight of a certain extent of territory called a "residence." Between Trichinopoly and Mysore they had organized the two residences of Pasur on the north, and Sattiamangalam on the west. Pasur extended 87 miles in one direction and 126 in another.\* Sattiamangalam extended about 75 miles either way, and included at one time 130 villages with 23 churches.† Its priest was protected by a patent from the king of Mysore. When the work shifted from the western borders to the eastern coast regions, a residence was established at Kallayi,‡ a village twenty miles south-west of Ginji, and nearly a hundred miles north of Tanjore. Nandavanam,§ between Tanjore and Madura, was a residence extending sixty miles east and west, and twelve miles broad.

The wars of the Nayakars and Musalmans and Mahrattas forced the missionaries to change their residences from time to time. At least five of the residences were the property of Hindu temples, and this exposed the Christians to trouble. Each residence was divided into at least two districts. Sattiamangalam || had two, of which one was very healthy, while in the other death's ravages were very great. In one of its towns, Palghat, more than 3,000 persons died of contagious diseases in one season. Another place was said to "devour its missionaries by dangerous dewes."

In 1677, the residence of Kallayi in Coromandel was divided into the districts of Koranapatti in the north and Tattuvancheri in the south. Koranapatti was thirty miles north-west of Kallayi, and took in a large part of Vellore, the present field of the American Arcot Mission. It also included the province of Tiruvannamalei, where the Danish missionaries are now at work.

A further subdivision was made into provinces. The northern district of Pasur included seven provinces. Among them were Salem¶ and Omalur, in modern times occupied by the London Missionary Society. Each village supported its own church, and all the villages of a given area united in the support of the central church. Trichinopoly\*\* was managed by two fathers and six catechists and was reported to have had 2,000 conversions in two years.

While de Nobili's great experiment of establishing the mission exclusively among Brahmans and princes had failed, his

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\* Proenza, 1660.    † Freire, 1666.    ‡ *Id.*, 1676.    § *Id.*, 1678.

|| *Id.*, 1682.

¶ *Id.*, 1678.

\*\* Da Costa, 1653.

methods had been so deeply impressed upon the work of the mission that it was considered of paramount importance to keep high and low caste Christians separate. In Madura this was easily done because of the two churches existing there. But in the villages it was a difficult problem. So this matter was considered in Cochin,\* and it was decided to establish two classes of missionaries, one called Brahman sannyasis, and the other missionary pandarams.

**Separation of  
Castes.**

The Brahman sannyasis continued the methods of de Nobili, living as ascetics and employing only Brahman servants. This required of them not only a strict vegetarian diet, but great linguistic and literary attainments. And some were worthy successors of de Nobili in learning languages. In 1699 Father Martin came from Persia to Bengal.† On the way he and a companion were made prisoners by Arabs, because they would not avow themselves Musalmans. They were supposed to have come from Constantinople, so their ship was seized and they were locked up in a prison on shore as Parangis. On their denial that they were Parangis they were liberated and allowed to go to Surat. Martin disguised himself and spent five months in a Bengal university learning Bengali. When war broke out between Musalmans and Hindus, he went to Orissa and gathered some followers. From there he was sent to Pondicherry, the only place in India belonging to the French. He was ordered to China but did not go. For four years he had done nothing but study languages, during which time he had learned Persian, Turkish, Moorish, and Bengali; and on entering Madura he set to work on Tamil and Portuguese.

At times the sannyasi missionaries were a protection to the pandarams and their low-caste Christians.‡ For instance, when a Brahman antagonist called on the missionary sannyasi, he became satisfied that the father was really a Brahman, and ordered all his fellow Brahmans to treat him as they would his own guru. When a sannyasi baptized Pareians or Paravans he had to do it secretly. When one of this order once visited Madura he found the "Parava father" absent, so he worked for the Paravans by night and the high castes by day.§ "He gave his nights to the faithful and his days to the pagans" is the record of

\* Martinz, 1638.

† Proenza, 1665.

‡ Martin, Jan. 30, 1699.

§ Roderiguez.



another father. Still another would spend all night with Pareians,\* who had to leave before sunrise, and all day disputing with Hindus, who treated him with incivility.

The pandaraswamies,† as the Christians called them, differed from the Brahmans in having non-Brahman servants, and in being free to work among low-castes and out-castes. Owing to the prejudice against Parangis, they too left off black and dressed like Hindu pandarams, and lived the ascetic life of sannyasis. Living not more than two months in a place, they would travel on foot in the burning heat, and without shelter at night. They were devoted to the Pareians. The Madura Portuguese‡ fathers belonged to the pandaram class, but they were especially despised by high caste Hindus as Parangis. The people scorned them all the more because until 1669 they were under foreign protection. Up to that time Portuguese influence had been sufficient to save them from persecution; whereas the sannyasi missionaries, not being Portuguese, were cruelly persecuted. When, however, the Portuguese power was overthrown by the Dutch in 1669, the pandarams in Madura were exposed to the same persecutions as other priests.

Zealous neophytes, after some instruction, were appointed catechist pandarams. Sometimes they would receive a small sum for their support, but often they had to live on gifts and charity. Each congregation was left in the care of such a catechist.§ It was his duty to preside over the prayers, teach the catechism to the children, assist the sick and dying, arrange meetings with the missionary, and make known feast days and fasts. Besides the usual Saturday fasts, others were added for Fridays and Wednesdays. On these days they would eat one meal about sunset.

Besides those in charge of congregations there were catechists who accompanied the missionaries.|| Such a catechist had to go ahead, prepare an exact register of all who asked for baptism, find out who ought to approach the sacraments, who were quarrelling, and who were not living exemplary lives, and also record the general state of the country. One such catechist had been a yogi. He had a good voice, and on arriving at any place would start a hymn to attract the people. Then he would call upon them to bring padi (rice) for the preachers. Another

\* Freire, 1692.

† Da Costa, July 1843.

‡ Freire, 1676.

§ Da Costa, 1644.

|| Manduit, Sept. 29, 1700.



catechist was a very learned Pareian, who had been secretly baptized by a missionary sannyasi. Before he died he saw 5,000 of his people become Christians. From 1659 catechists on their death received the same honours as the missionaries.\*

The order of missionary Brahman already existed in de Nobili and his associates. Forthwith the Cochin fathers selected Father da Costa † to establish the order of missionary pandarams.

**Double  
Appointments.**

And thenceforward appointments were made on the two-fold system. For instance, Arcolini ‡ was appointed Brahman, and Proenza pandaram, in Trichinopoly. Madura had more than two §: it had at one time a Brahman father and two pandaram fathers, besides a father in the church of the Paravans. In 1650, when Father Martinz was appointed superior of the whole Madura mission and took up his residence in Sattiamangalam, two new missionaries were appointed for that residence, Stephen as sannyasi, and de Silva as pandaram. Separate churches also sprang up. Of seven that were established near Tanjore four belonged to the Pareia Christians.

Father Martinz || gave it as his opinion that the pandarams had the advantage. Yet they did not command the respect and authority that sannyasis did. One Brahman missionary converted more

**The two Orders  
compared.**

pagans than two pandarams, and his converts were the ones that created the moral impression on all castes.

Da Costa, who established the order of pandarams, had studied in Coimbatore. His chest was weak, but he had prostrated himself at the college and besought that his name be added to those of the missionaries, so he was accepted for this work. In 1643 ¶ Father Alvarez joined da Costa as his companion. He was born in Negapatam of rich and honourable parents, and was educated in Jaffnapatam, Ceylon. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1630. Going about barefooted, he "carried his own chapel." His favourite virtue was charity. He would borrow money for his Christians, and then throw himself before his crucifix. God supplied him with abundant gifts.

This thorough organization\*\* of the mission gave it power to crush out rivals, which it did not hesitate to use, as is shown by

\* Proenza, 1660.

† Martinz, 1638.

‡ Da Costa, 1653.

§ Proenza, 1660.

|| Martinz, Dec. 31, 1651.

¶ Proenza, 1665.

\*\* Freire, 1682.

the experience of a Carmelite priest in 1650. A Christian under discipline went to the Syrian Christians in the mountains of Travancore and represented to their bishop that in Uttamapalayam at the foot of the mountains on the Madura side there were several Brahman converts who had not accepted baptism at the hands of the Jesuits, because they regarded them as Parangis. He was asked to come and baptize them, and with them a great prince of that region. The bishop sent an Italian Carmelite, and he went in his European dress to the church at Uttamapalayam. The catechist there begged him to avoid low-caste neophytes, and because he refused to do that withdrew with the whole congregation and then shut him out of the church. The Carmelite's guide abandoned him and the Hindus would not help him, so that the poor man, forsaken in a strange country, disappeared, and probably perished. The Madura priests approved of the catechist's action.

**Treatment of  
Rival Missions.**

*Experiences of the Pandarams.*

Da Costa in 1653, after fifteen years' experience, in a letter from Tanjore, described the sufferings of the missionaries as follows:—

1. *Climate*.—A burning atmosphere; the rays reflected by the burning earth rival those of the sky shed down upon your head. Add a flat calm, and you stifle. If wind comes, it is so charged with the sands it has covered it burns like steel from a furnace. A single journey in this vapour is enough to renew all the exterior of a man without renewing his youth. Wind from the mountains is cooler, but more violent, sweeping along a cloud of dust. From four to six in the morning there is abundant dew.

2. *Habitation*.—A cabin of earth thatched, with no windows, and door like the entrance to a den. You can scarcely stir without breaking your head against the beams. White-ants, serpents, scorpions, rats nibbling your feet, bats carrying away the wick of your lamp even when lighted; these are your fellows. Your bed is a mat, or tiger skin, or plank on the floor.

3. *Food*.—A handful of rice cooked in water, seasoned with a decoction of pepper, sometimes with bitter herbs; add vegetables, milk and melted butter, and you have an Easter feast. "We pandarams," he writes, "can add a little meat, but it would create a scandal, and the fear of being discovered takes away the pleasure, so we prefer a little fish."

4. *Journeys*.—There are the continual journeys to patients, and the overwhelming labour of confessions. In the night one is sure to fall into the hands of robbers. There is danger from sandals and danger from bare feet on sands that burn like coals. In the rains continual effort is required to withdraw one's feet from the mud mixed with thorns and pebbles; the rivers and canals become torrents, and progress is made only by wading and swimming while carrying empty utensils. One priest could reach his people only by cutting his way through a vast thorny forest full of tigers. Still, little by little they would get used to such efforts.

5. *Persecutions*.—Worse than these were the persecution and scorn of determined enemies. "The people are the vilest race one can imagine. The government is only tyranny, and there is nothing but disorder and confusion."

6. *Solicitude*.—Worse than all was the solicitude for the congregations; the banishment and torture of Christians, the backsliding of some, the impious blasphemies of pagans, powerlessness to satisfy the demands of the Christians, and the mass of paganism.

7. *Consolations*.—Consolations there were, *viz.*, the joy of making God loved and glorified, peopling heaven, and tearing souls away from hell.

**Methods of  
Pandarams.**

As the life of de Nobili, especially after he took the pilgrim staff, exhibits the methods and experiences of the sannyasi missionaries, so the methods of pandarams are illustrated by the life of the two pandaram companions, da Costa and Alvarez. They were devoted to the out-caste Pareians, but they also laboured among Chettis, Vadugans, and other respectable caste people, and were at times received by Nayaka rulers.

In 1643 \* da Costa went from Trichinopoly to Sattiamangalam on foot, carrying his things on his shoulders. Five and a half days' walking brought him to a village where one hundred neophytes from the surrounding region had gathered to meet him. They were caste people brought by the poor Pareians. Unfortunately they did not stand firm as Christians, but after a little all backslid. On arrival at Sattiamangalam he lodged overnight in the vestibule of a temple.† The next morning he called on the Nayakar and gave him a crystal prism, much to his delight. The Brahmans tried in vain to explain the secrets of it, and the yogis spread rumours of his practising sorcery by a glass. After the

\* Da Costa, July 1643.

† *Id.*

Nayakar had spent an hour over the prism he asked da Costa his business, and was told that he came to proclaim spiritual truth. The prince then granted him permission to proclaim his message, and provided a house and meals for him and four companions. After entertaining him eight days he made the courtiers prostrate themselves before him, and in parting gave him a shawl of fine stuff and the patent to preach.

The years 1646 and 1647 were years of famine and terrible mortality in Trichinopoly. Alvarez treated patients who came from great distances, sometimes twenty-four miles. A man in high favour at court, when dying, disposed of his fortune in favour of the poor, and for building a church for Pareians and the support of two catechists. This chapel was a great boon. Alvarez also rebuilt the church for high castes.

North-west of Trichinopoly, six miles away on the banks of the Kavery river, is Srirangam, the seat of a famous Vishnu temple. When Alvarez had built a church in that vicinity, soldiers seized him, garrotted him, and dragged him before the governor in Trichinopoly, who allowed the yogis to ill-treat him in his presence.\* They then conducted him to the temple of Srirangam and searched him, but found no money. In doing this they discovered marks of his self-inflicted penances and instantly released him, fed him, and treated him as a sannyasi, though they detained him in Srirangam. The Christians were kept in irons. The governor† wrote to the Nayakar at Madura about the gold the missionary was supposed to have, and his letter was given to the Brahman governing under the Nayakar. This Brahman warned the governor that he had violated the patents given to the missionary. So the governor hastened to recall him from Srirangam to Trichinopoly, greeted him politely, and pressed him strongly to pay a ransom and escape. Alvarez declared his vow of poverty. They then tried to make the Christians pay a ransom for their swami, but the father would not consent. The governor wrote again to the Brahman minister, trying to be relieved from any further reference to the father; but the Brahman replied that his only safety lay in getting the money. This frightened the governor so that he sent Alvarez out of the territory.

Da Costa took up the case of his companion and went to Madura to appeal to the Nayakar,‡ and after waiting fifteen days

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\* Da Costa, 1648.

† Proenza, 1659.

‡ *Id.*



TRICHINOPOLY ROCK AND FORT







for the feast of the new moon in September he was successful. The Nayakar ordered the restoration of everything to the Christians. When da Costa went again to the governor of Trichinopoly, the latter wanted to take him around on an elephant. At any rate churches and everything else were restored.

Kandalur\* was in the forest south of Trichinopoly in the territory of robbers, and when the pandaraswamies and their people were driven out of Trichinopoly and Tanjore it was a convenient refuge. By having a great shed outside the church the Pareians could attend the same service with robber converts. Alvarez had a bad cough and used his enforced repose at Kandalur in com-

**Drama of  
Jehoshaphat.**

posing the play of Jehoshaphat.† People would camp under the trees to see it, and it was a great success. From that time half the popula-

tion of Kandalur, headed by the robber chief, wished to follow Christianity, and were baptized. This play displaced idolatrous festivals.

**Accessions  
in Tanjore.**

About this time a young man in Tanjore went to Trichinopoly to be received as a Christian, but was refused on account of his bad name.‡ He then went to Madura and learned that his two wives were a hindrance, so put away one as a sister, giving her money. There was then no missionary nor catechist at Madura, so he wandered to Karur, west of Trichinopoly, where he found da Costa, and received baptism. On his return to Tanjore his parents and relatives were so interested in his experience that more than a hundred came and sought instruction. Da Costa had to cross several rivers to get there, and sat a long time on the bank of one waiting for the water to run off. After a tour in the villages he returned to Tanjore and baptized seventy high caste people and eighty Pareians and Pallans. He displayed some presents for the captain of the Tanjore Nayakar in order to gain an audience, but had to wait a month and a half, and then was received with haughtiness. But when the captain learned the truth about him he begged his pardon for treating him so badly, came and visited him in his hut, promised him a tiled house, and made him ride in his own palanquin. At the Easter festival they had music with forty sorts of instruments.

A village officer (*maniagarar*) sent his domestic to the priest to be made a Christian in order to reform him. He was forced

\* Proenza, 1659.

† Da Costa, 1653.

‡ *Id.*

at first, but afterwards submitted voluntarily. The maniagaran was so well satisfied with the result that he repeated the experiment with others. Parents also used to send their incorrigible children for the same purpose.

Alvarez was on his way to Sattiamangalam, when he fell ill at a place called Chengam.\* The Pareia

**Deaths.**

Christians of Sattiamangalam begged so hard that he should visit them that he started. But his disease was upon him and he had to return to Chengam, where he died. His tomb became a place of pilgrimage. It is written of him that he "shared his recompense," *viz.*, death, with his catechist. The disease is not mentioned, but the account of the two deaths in this way reads as if it were cholera. Alvarez died June 18, 1664, aged 51, after 21 years of service in the mission.

During the wars between the Portuguese and Dutch, 1667-1669, da Costa was sent to Rome. Early in 1673 he started from Portugal with sixteen missionaries, one Jean de Britto among them.† When the great heat of a calm fell upon the ship eighty passengers succumbed, da Costa included. He died on April 21 of that year.

The work of pandaraswamies was very much the same as that of the missionary Brahmans. But there

**Results.**

were differences. They had no Brahman converts, and much less to do with courts and courtiers than the other class of missionaries. On the other hand they had many Pareia and other out-caste converts as well as some from the middle castes. Their journeys seem to have been longer, their exposures to dangers greater, and therefore their mortality greater.

The Christian community must have varied greatly at different times in numbers and in the character of its members, as wars, famines, persecutions, followed times of peace and prosperity in rapid succession. But as early as 1610, Père Aqua Viva, general, spent three weeks in Madura on a visit, and was much impressed with the large number of the Christians. As the work increased the community spread more and more widely over the country. After the middle of the century a powerful vassal of the Madura Nayakar who reigned north of Trichinopoly asked the first governor of his estates how many Christians there were.

\* Proenza, 1665.

† Freire, 1676.

The governor replied that they were everywhere and could not be counted. They were often despoiled because of the paucity of their numbers in any one place. But in certain places they were strong enough to defend themselves. In a small village on the Koleroon, some Christian hunters were attacked by robbers and successfully defended themselves in forts named after saints. In 1676 an enthusiastic father wrote that the Christians of Tanjore could be encountered in all the countries of India and even in Ceylon and Malacca.\*

The Pareia Christians were numerous enough at the palace in Tanjore at one time to control the work for the king's elephants and horses, a work done only by Pareians. This gave them power to protect their community from persecution by going on strike. The Brahmans had secured permission to arrest all Christians, and the prisons of Kumbakonam near Tanjore were filled with them, when those in the palace sought a hearing before the king through a Musalman general. This general, after promising to help them, was bribed to refuse by the gift of a fine horse. They then secretly addressed another Musalman, and those working in the royal stables all struck work. When the king inquired the cause of the trouble, it gave the second Musalman a chance to speak for the prisoners in Kumbakonam. This led the king to send an order to the prison to examine the Christians. The Brahmans had intended to drag them at the tails of horses and so kill them. But when the chief Brahman called an assembly, and put before it the order of the king, no one could prove anything against them; so the persecution ended.

Christianity was regarded as very flourishing in Madura as compared with other regions.† For instance, when a father spent three and a half months near Kanjivaram, the great Hindu centre, he found it necessary to take more precautions than in Madura. He had to appease the ill-humour of great people; life was very rude; to gain believers he found it essential to practise a continual fast, taking only rice, herbs, and water, as he could not fall behind the Brahmans in austerity.

The Christian community included representatives of almost all the castes. There were Brahmans, weavers of rank and wealth, salt merchants and blacksmiths, as well as Pareians, Pallans and Paravans and mendicants of all castes. One mendicant‡ was a

From many  
Castes.

\* Freire, 1676.    † Manduit, Sept. 29, 1700.    ‡ Martin, June 1, 1700.

man with an iron frame three and a half feet square riveted to his neck in pursuance of a vow to raise money for the construction of a large tank.

This community took a commendable position on the question of polygamy. In Trichinopoly there was a convert, Amator, who, at a meeting of the leaders of his caste, by his eloquence persuaded them to make a law against polygamy, requiring each man to attach himself to a single wife and observe conjugal fidelity. This law was approved by the Nayakar, and sent to the judges of customs, who were responsible for the execution of laws.

**Zeal against  
Idolatry.**

They were zealous against idolatry, and when their zeal was not tempered with discretion they were very apt to bring down upon themselves persecution from the Hindus. For instance, in 1639 at Trichinopoly, they showed such arrogance and temerity in openly mocking idols and ridiculing the stupidity of their worshippers, that the yogis responded by arousing the cupidity of a minister and the son of a Brahman governor at court. The Pareians were plundered and five of them, including Hilary the learned convert baptized by de Nobili, were carried to prison. For three days and nights the yogis paraded the streets at the head of a crowd. In the presence of an idol that was supposed to strike down any one that wore sandals in its sanctuary the pagans dared a Christian to do it.\* He not only put on his sandals, but used them to smash the clay horses and images in front of the idol, and then jumped on the idol itself. He was driven out of the place. At Sattiamangalam† neophytes publicly dishonoured the lingam, and a Christian secretly entered the temple at night, and cut off the head of the idol, leaving it in the temple inclosure. A tumult followed in the city. The Christian was seized, suspended by his feet, beaten with tamarind boughs and called upon to renounce Jesus and invoke the idol. He fainted, and they stretched him out and left him for dead. When he revived he first went to the church, and then went and begged pardon of the Hindus.

**Zeal for Trials  
by Ordeal.**

They frequently submitted to trials by ordeal, such as fire and boiling liquid, common among the people. A Christian named Papo ‡ met an accusation by accepting the test of boiling butter. His accuser lighted a fire, and threw into it a flower that was instantly

\* Da Costa, 1653.

† Proenza, 1665.

‡ *Id.*



consumed. When they had taken away Papo's clothes, untied his hair, and cut his nails, he plunged his hand into the boiling butter with no apparent injury. Thereupon the Hindus themselves conducted him in triumph to the palace, and his accuser was condemned to pay a fine of 150 crowns. The judges insisted that the other Christians should pay part, but they refused. The next day the accuser bribed the judge to put corrosive powder into Papo's hand as he handed him 50 crowns. After an hour Papo was called again, when, lo! the powder had produced pustules. So Papo was condemned to pay the 150 crowns, and the Hindus sounded trumpets over their victory.

Catechist Xavier was asked for money and put to the test of fire.\* He submitted one hand and it was enveloped with cloth, saturated with oil, and set on fire. We may infer that it burned him, for he was not released, but taken to prison. The Christians took up arms and rescued him by force. Fortunately for them the governor, who had acted against Xavier, himself fell into disfavour with the government, and was beaten and deposed.

North of Trichinopoly and separated from it by the rivers Kaveri and Koleroon, was the Christian community of Pasur. These people suffered less than other Christians because they were willing to occupy a place deserted† for fear of devils at the foot of a high hill covered with forest, and when attacked they could retire to the mountains with their treasures. The lord of a neighbouring province, seeing this, wished them to recover some of his deserted lands, and promised them never to set up an image of the demon, and also agreed to exempt them from all charges for idol worship.

**Disregard of  
Devils.**

At Kumbakonam every twelfth year, at a certain instant indicated by the Brahmans, on the occasion of the conjunction of certain stars, the waters of the Ganges, a thousand miles away, were supposed to flow into a great tank. A vast assemblage of people would then enter on one side and leave on the other, thus effacing all crimes. The indifference and mockery of the Christians at this festival were noticed and made the subject of accusations against them.

In Tanjore the Christians were accused to the governor of selling an ox‡ to the foreigners at Tranquebar to be killed and eaten. The neophytes asked de Britto to get a letter from the

\* Proenza, 1659.

† *Id.*, 1660.

‡ Freire, 1682.

Marava King to the governor, which he did. A Christian was sent with the letter to the governor and the latter wrote to the king, "Your lordship favours the disciples of the Lord of all things because you are not informed of their vile and barbarous crimes: they kill and eat oxen, and I have been advised to exterminate their tribe. Without this oxen and cows without number will fall." After reading this letter in public the governor gave it unsealed to the Christian to be delivered to the king. He delivered it to the father, and the father tore it up.

Christian  
Officials.

A few members of the Christian community were appointed to offices in the villages or in the raja's court. In Tinnevely, a catechist and his brother were attacked by soldiers, and they escaped; but their houses were pillaged and their wives taken. A Marava chief brought back their wives and gave them other houses, and also appointed the catechist to govern a circle of villages. At one time the "director of works" at the palace of the great Nayakar was Sattianadan, a Christian and nephew of the first lord of the court. He was said to have proved his constancy.

Great distances and many obstacles were overcome by many in their zeal for attendance at mass. In Coromandel, where floods were frequent, many neophytes would gather to meet their missionary, even women swimming rivers to receive the mass.

When a father\* was under torture a catechist advanced between him and the soldiers and said, "Why do you spare us?" The governor took him at his word, and caused him to be bruised with blows, and would have killed him if he had had authority. As it was he tried to extort money from him and his fellow Christians. They replied that they would rather give money to receive blows than to avert them.

The Christians were always liable to be driven from their homes by invading armies or by their own rulers. At such times they would emigrate, and some would die of hunger. In 1660, they were described as living skeletons wandering on the mountains. At such times too the Dutch† traded on their miseries, attracting them to the coast by the bait of abundant food, and then sending them to other countries as slaves.

In Uttamapalayam‡ many Christians were arrested, tried and tortured on a holy Friday. Two men held a catechist suspended by his hair, while others whipped him; they then took

\* Martin, Dec. 11, 1700.

† Proenza, 1660.

‡ *Id.*

him to the governor, who ordered him to be impaled. As he was carried forth they met the maniagaran and he put him to the torture again, then imprisoned him, leaving him with his arms on the rack in the form of a cross. After twenty days they branded his forehead and drove him into exile. Forty neophytes were tortured with the catechist, and then released with a fine. A commandant\* in Madura tortured a Christian fifteen days and was so struck with his fortitude that he released him and took him into his service.

**Fidelity under  
Persecution.**

The first martyr† mentioned is Hilary, who was killed in Trichinopoly in 1639. He was in prison for the third time when one executioner with a stone struck his head, and another with a club broke his ribs and left him covered with blood. Later on a converted Vellalan (farmer) met a Hindu pandaram begging and gave him half his cloth; he then met another poor man and gave him the other half. He had brought six persons into Christianity, and excited a general persecution by refusing to perform idolatrous ceremonies. At length a yogi buried a poniard in his side and killed him.

**Subsequent  
History.**

In 1776 Fra Paolino da San Bartolomeo found in Madura 18,000 and in Tanjore 10,000 Christians. Not being a Jesuit he may have been prejudiced against their work, but he is quoted by a nineteenth century writer in an Indian review as saying that the Christians of Madura lived in the lowest state of superstition and ignorance. His account of the morals, especially those of the catechists and native clergymen, is said to be too gross for description.

As a community the Christians almost entirely disappeared from the interior. The Paravans on the coast were the only large body that maintained their Christian status. Other small bodies continued in places scattered far and wide; and subsequently these became nuclei for reviving the work. There were also prominent families here and there that remained faithful. One such was that of Tadia Tevar, prince of Marava and convert and defender of de Britto at Ramnad. Descendants of Tadia Tevar are now members of the mission of the American Board in the Madura district.

\* Freire, 1682.

† Da Costa, 1648.

At the close of the seventeenth century the French fathers in Pondicherry started a mission in Golconda modeled on the Madura mission, with Pondicherry as the centre, and the parallel below Pondicherry, the 11th, as the dividing line between it and Madura.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *Sufferings and Martyrdom.*

THE life of the missionaries was necessarily very abstemious because they undertook to rival the Indians in asceticism.\* They lived in thatch huts, and sat on the floor, eating with their hands. They took neither meat, nor fish, nor eggs, nor wine. Their open air life had its advantages for health, but at times it exposed them to malignant fevers, and other ills.† De Britto at one time had to camp in a wood fifteen days, exposed to tigers and robbers, without necessaries, and with nothing to drink except the muddy water of a ditch. For a time after that he was stricken down with fever, besides having ophthalmia and poisoned boils on his legs. The doctors gave him up, but he survived. The journeys of Freire‡ over the mountains west of Madura were typical of many others. He would pass over one range by climbing bare ledges, only to find himself at the foot of other ranges equally high. Spending the night in a village in the valley between the ranges, he would go on the next day to a rocky slope surrounded by the haunts of beasts of the forest. Descending again over abysses he would sit down and slide. In the plain lack of water would force him to continue his journey until nightfall. When at last he reached a village he would wander around without any place to rest or to cook until some Hindu should recognise him and give him room in his own house. One night in a wood he found a large serpent on his mat and a big black scorpion near by ; another night a large thorn entered far into his foot and a bear prowled around.

Vacandarayar,§ brother-in-law and first favourite of Tirumala Nayakar, was a sworn enemy of the Christians. So when an influential Pareian demanded a Christian girl and was refused and

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\* Bouchet, Dec. 1, 1700.

† Freire, 1682.

‡ Freire, 1682.

§ Maya, 1640.







GINJI ROCK

therefore stirred up the yogis and pandarams to address the favourite, accusing the priest, the favourite was only too ready. On Sunday, July 22nd, when Martinz was preparing to celebrate Holy Mass, soldiers came and arrested a Brahman convert who was to have received it. Martinz came out,\* only to be seized and

**Arrest of Martinz.** carried off with the Brahman, suffering blows as he went along. Vacandarayar sent them to cells for great criminals. Martinz was beaten until he was covered with blood. Two other Christians were also taken, and all four were put in irons. The next day they ordered the father to leave the country and dropped him into the Kaveri river. On the other side a Brahman sent him fifteen annas. He forthwith sent a messenger to Madura to warn da Costa to fly to Karur, and he himself went to Ginji. The messenger went to Madura and found two neophytes and thirty other Christians in prison. This was the second imprisonment of Martinz;† the first was with Lopez at Madura; twice again he was imprisoned in Sattiamangalam. In all these imprisonments he was beaten; and once in Sattiamangalam he received so many blows that his swollen and livid face was unrecognisable. He was also four times exiled‡ with ignominy, twice from Trichinopoly. On one of these occasions he was driven out with a necklace of leaves and pebbles, when even children were cruel to him and made the blood flow. Once he was nearly burned to death in his presbytery during an attack by furious yogis.

His daily repast was a little millet§ toward evening. In his last illness he had to ask a Christian for a bed with cords on a frame, no pillow being available. He died in Trichinopoly, August 22nd, 1656, at the age of 63, after thirty-one years of service. He left some Tamil writings. De Nobili had planted and Martinz|| watered. As between the two, the Christians respected and venerated de Nobili; they had confidence and love for Martinz.

When Chokkanada Nayakar¶ ruled the Madura kingdom Father Proenza was made the object of various court intrigues in Trichinopoly. The chief actors were:—

1. The chief of customs, a minister of the Valeia (hunter) caste.

\* Maya, 1640.

§ *Id.*

† Proenza, 1660.

|| *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

¶ *Id.*, 1665.

2. His tool, the ambalakaran (chief man) of the Valeia caste.
3. Sivandiappan, Brahman governor of Trichinopoly, hostile to Christians.
4. The Nayak general, uncle of the king, friendly to Christians.
5. The king, first in Madura, then in Trichinopoly.

The Valeia minister's relatives had lived in poverty near the church for twenty years ; and he planned to use them to annihilate Christianity. By telling them that it was not fitting that his relatives should remain poor when they could become rich by plundering the church, he incited them to do so. Proenza was warned and fled to Kandalur ; and the only booty they found consisted of a horse, two deer skins, a bed and some chairs.

Then a trap\* was laid for Proenza. On his return a Valeian visited him as an inquirer, and at night rushed out from among the Christians as if possessed by a devil. This brought out all the Valeians again and the next day they made a formal complaint against the priest for causing possession. Governor Sivandiappan† gave the Valeia minister permission to take his peons and arrest Proenza ; so the minister ordered them to climb the walls and drag him out by his hair. Again he escaped, and this time concealed himself in the opposite extremity of the city. Then the minister wreaked his vengeance on the ambalakaran of his own people.

The general, hearing of Proenza's difficulties,‡ invited him to his palace, met him with honour, and seated him by himself on the carpet. Proenza demanded an opportunity to defend himself and the Valeian was brought before the appointed judges. He spoke very humbly, and was condemned and ordered to restore Proenza's horse, and, like Haman, conduct him with pomp to his house. While the humbled Valeian,§ as he was conducting Proenza, passed the governor's palace, the latter took Proenza inside and humiliated him, which was not like Haman. He also reversed the sentence against the Valeian.

In this clash between the civil and military authorities|| the governor feared the general and sent a skilful negotiator to turn his mind. But the general felt his honour impugned and without replying sent soldiers who conducted Proenza back to his palace. This brought a Brahman from the governor with humble excuses, and the general vented his wrath in abuse of the governor.

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\* Proenza 1665.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*

|| *Id.*

During the following night both parties sent messengers to the pradani,\* or prime minister in Madura, seventy-five miles to the south. He paid no attention to the statements of either side, but ordered them to examine the case and send him the evidence. The general, therefore, ordered a public trial, sent for the governor,† and went in pomp to the palace. When the judges and lords had assembled, the governor demanded the appearance of Proenza. This the general refused, saying the priest's deputy was there. The governor then rejected the accusation against the Valeian for want of evidence, and banished both the accuser and the accused. The general scorned the sentence, saying he was not there for a comedy.

The governor, therefore, called the Valeian again. This treacherous fellow and his wife had before declared the charge against him to be a calumny paid for by his subordinate the ambalakaran, and now he hastened to quit himself of all responsibility by saying that he knew nothing but what the ambalakaran had said, and the latter had only heard what the catechumens had said. The Madura pradani,‡ on receiving the evidence acquitted Proenza; he also condemned the Valeia chief and his ambalakaran to pay a fine of several thousand pounds, the larger part to come from the chief himself.

This led the Valeian§ to start new plots; so Proenza went to Madura for an audience. The general had already written a friendly letter on his behalf to his nephew, the king. Although the king would not see him, he gave him a safe conduct. Later|| in the year the king returned to Trichinopoly, when his clown, a Brahman, entered into a plot with Proenza's enemies and uttered calumnies against the Christians. Hearing them, the king said such persons should have their ears cut off; whereupon the Valeian and his confederates hastened to inflict that punishment on Proenza, but he had fled to Kandalur. For a time the Valeian continued to show his hatred and the king did nothing. At length the Valeian was called to account for the treasures in his charge, and put in irons. It ended with his being tortured by order of the Nayakar; when he left the executioner his body was all one wound.

The great Nayakar¶ had punished a powerful vassal who ruled between Sattiamangalam on the north-west and Mullipadi, near

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\* Proenza, 1660.

|| *Id.*

† *Id.*

¶ Freire, 1666.

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*



Dindigul, on the south-east. This vassal ordered his people to kill all strangers that entered his territory, and bring to him the spoil. Father Roderiguez was about to enter, when he turned aside to help a sick man. Soldiers had seen and pursued him from afar. A Christian warned him of his danger, but he went directly to the fortress. The guards refused to admit him, and one ran and told the prince of the rich capture. The prince sent the messenger back with the command that after nightfall two soldiers should kill him in an adjacent forest. One of two detailed for this purpose was a Christian, and he advised the father to confess his followers. Eight or ten soldiers fell upon Roderiguez and searched his baggage. Two chiefs of the guards sat and directed the plundering; they tore from the disciples their earrings, but did not molest the father. When the order was given to behead the whole party they all fell on their knees and crossed their arms. The leader finally relented, put the father by his side, and then politely sent him away. It was the influence of the Christian soldier that had saved them.

One\* of the fathers was taken before a governor and judges in the region south of Madura, and condemned to **Personal Violence.** have his nose and ears cut off. A soldier drew his sabre, when one of the judges suggested breaking his teeth. Two soldiers tried their fists gently, at which the governor threatened them with his sword. He was not satisfied until four or five teeth were knocked out and the victim's head battered. The governor† of Kanjiveram let loose upon a missionary soldiers of big mouth, who bit him to the quick over all his body, like mad dogs.

When their people became irregular or disorderly the fathers exercised discipline of one kind or another. Certain neophytes‡ went hunting on Saturday and only one attended mass on Sunday, the church being five miles away. So they were interdicted until they went to the father for restoration. Two of their party had been killed by an enormous boar. In another instance after a father had scolded, prayed and wept with his disorderly Christians, he bared his shoulders and gave himself a rude discipline.§

When their own Christians turned against them they were among the most deadly enemies the fathers had.|| Three catechists that had been deprived of their employment determined to

\* Martin, Dec. 11, 1700.

§ Freire, 1676.

† Dohn, Oct. 4, 1700.

|| Martin, Dec. 11, 1700.

‡ Proenza, 1660.



destroy the mission in 1700. They made three charges to the officers of Queen Mangammal, who was then ruling the country for her grandson. They declared (1) that the priests were Parangis; (2) that they had caused the death of a priest of another order, and (3) incurred the displeasure of their own head, the Pope.

For fourteen or fifteen years\* the queen-grandmother had committed all power to her prime minister, and he was reputed to be the best minister that ever governed Madura. He was in Trichinopoly at this time and to him Father Bouchet appealed with the gift of a terrestrial globe two feet in diameter, and having Tamil names inlaid with various kinds of glass. The minister received him with honour and distinction. He saluted him with his hands joined while he accepted from him the salutation of open hands, as of a superior. He also seated himself beside him in a narrow place on the floor and placed his knees on the father's. This in the presence of an assembly of 500 persons, mostly Brahmans.

The father† told the minister that he came from the great city of the north, Rome; and that he taught the holy law, which required fidelity. The minister replied that it must require great boldness to do that, and ordered the chief astrologer to learn from him the use of the globe. The minister then carried to the queen the globe and a pair of bracelets, a cock made of shells, and other gifts from Bouchet, which excited the queen's admiration. While this was going on the lords took Bouchet into the garden, and instantly rumours were started to the effect that he had been cast into prison. But soon the minister returned and treated him like an ambassador, informing him that the queen had ordered that he should receive all he wanted. The father considerably made no reference to his renegade enemies; and the minister ordered his officers to take him through the city in his finest palanquin to show that he was under his protection. After doing that they even carried him to his residence twelve miles away. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that two of those catechists came back.

When one father was with a besieged party in a fortress in Sattiamangalam territory the governor-general of Mysore sent a party of 200 men with another father and raised the siege. The two missionaries went to Sattiamangalam to thank the

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\* Martin, Dec. 11, 1700.

† *Id.*

governor-general and were received with demonstrations; but both died of exhaustion.

Proenza, who had been the object of court intrigues in Trichinopoly, used to make long excursions north of Trichinopoly to minister to the Pareians, for whom he showed great zeal. One day he was found in a state of exhaustion by a visiting father, and died fourteen days after. He was born in Lombardy and died at the age of forty-two after thirteen years of service in the mission.

During the years 1670-1680 the work of the mission declined in the western regions of Sattiamangalam, and thereafter extended all along the eastern coast of Coromandel from Ginji on the north to Marava on the south. This region includes the great deltas of the Kavery, Koleroon and other rivers, so that floods figure largely among the obstacles in the way of mission work.

The wars of Sivaji drove Father Freire from Koranapatti, but he persisted in going there for Easter. To save himself\* from the cupidity of the people and the vexations of government employees, who despoiled all travellers above the common herd, he travelled by night on foot through forests, exposed to tigers and bears. After he had spent a whole month in the woods the Hindus were touched by his destitution sufficiently to give him the shelter of a porch. His companion about the same time, after swimming several rivers, was for three days caught between two that were impassable, with no food but herbs.

A sannyasi father † sailed from Tuticorin through the straits of Rameswaram and passed Tranquebar on his way to Porto Novo when he was driven back by current and corsair. A tempest carried the vessel off for eight days with food for only one. Finally a favourable wind brought them back. A tidal wave at one time inundated the villages of the coast and destroyed more than six thousand lives. Three of the fathers‡ once embarked at Cochin to sail round to the east coast. In a voyage of 35 days they suffered shipwreck three times. The last time their bark went to pieces and they were left clinging to the fragments until Musalmans rescued them and placed them in a little boat.

On December 17, 1678,§ the country around Tattuvancheri was inundated by a deluge that swept across the country from Sattiamangalam to the sea. Tattuvancheri was on a hill a mile and a half north of the Koleroon,

\* De Britto.

† Freire, 1676.

‡ *Id.*, 1682.

§ De Britto.

and Father de Britto had a church and presbytery part way up the hill. People assured him that the overflow of the river never reached this particular hill. But in the middle of the night he was awakened by the cries of villagers and found the water rising into the compound. Many ran into the thicket and climbed the trees. Before long the water in his house had risen to his breast, so he rushed through the flood to the top of the hill, where were the ruins of an old mud hut. Serpents filled the thicket, and eight of his Christians came and crowded together with him on the top of the hill. There they stood surrounded by an ocean, the bodies of men and animals, dead and dying, trunks of trees, beams, roofs of houses, and other débris continually floating past. They had no nourishment. There was food in the presbytery, but it could be obtained only by swimming. Serpents from all the plain and the thicket directed themselves toward the mound, some being of enormous size, and the human occupants of the hill top had to be on their guard every instant night and day to kill or drive them away.

It was Friday when the waters surprised them. By Saturday evening the flood had diminished somewhat, but on Sunday rose more than ever. All prepared to die, being overwhelmed with the mass of rushing water. After two days of danger and despair they had forgotten hunger. Finally by wading in water up to their shoulders they gathered wood in the thicket and cooked some rice. It took three days more for the waters to retire and leave them to come out of their strange prison. The church and presbytery were entirely destroyed, and they suffered from exposure to piercing winds. Two princes invited de Britto to come to their palace; but he asked and received a grant of the land that had saved them, and built a church on it.

The life of de Britto was so conspicuously full of sufferings that ended only with his martyrdom that they are given with some detail. He was a Portuguese Jesuit, the son of a viceroy of Brazil.

#### Early Life of de Britto.

He was born in Lisbon in 1647.\* At the age of nine he was chosen to study with a prince. In 1659 he was so reduced that the doctors lost hope of his recovery, but he surprised them. He then became a novitiate of the Jesuits. The prince visited him and found him caring for a sick servant. He used to do sewing in a hospital, and was a model of patience. After two years in a

\* Mello, 1686.

college at Ivora he went to Coimbra, and then was recalled to Lisbon to teach. At the age of 28 he volunteered to accompany da Costa to Malabar. His family tried to stop him, but he concealed himself in the vessel. This was the voyage when da Costa and so many others died. For three years he lived in Goa so rigorously that he was said to have "made a Madura in his cell." He studied languages, begged from door to door for the poor, taught children, and once was attacked by a crowd for saving two young people. He was called to teach in a college in Malabar, but went with Freire to Madura as the successor of the pandaram father Alvarez.\*

De Britto† once went to a village dependent on Madura where no Christians had gone before, and he was assailed in the night by a troop sent by the Brahmans. He demanded to know what they sought and they responded by garrotting and then imprisoning him. Twice they came with axes to behead him and twice they recoiled. Finally they tortured him and then set him at liberty.

He next entered Marava,‡ where no missionary had been for seventeen years. In passing near the famous town of Sivaganga he was arrested by the soldiers of a Marava general and taken before the king. There he was put in irons attached to stumps of trees, and tortured all night and part of the next day. Then the water torture was applied. It consisted in raising the victim by a cord attached to his arms and drawn over another cord, then dropping him into a tank, when he could be pulled under to drown or drawn up to be dropped a second time.

With five Christians§ he was taken to the large temple of Kaliarkoil, nine miles from Sivaganga, and there suspended to a tree by two cords fastened to his feet and hands. After a long time they were all taken to a den, then to a dirty cell, where they had only a handful of rice a day for eleven days. Next they were taken nine miles further north and there commanded to invoke Siva. When they refused the general was so enraged that he kicked and struck them. De Britto turned the other cheek.

He was condemned|| to have his hands and feet cut off and then to be impaled. The others, being younger, were to lose one foot, one hand, both ears, nose, and tongue, and then to be returned to their families. The executioner flogged them and caused blood to flow from all their members. De Britto was cast upon a rock

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\* Proenza, 1665.

† Mello, 1686.

‡ *Id.*

§ *Id.*

|| *Id.*

with rough projections and trampled upon by eight persons, until the projections entered his flesh, and then was left until evening, when he was taken to his cell. Some days later the executioner came with impaling stakes, and axes and blocks to cut off his limbs. But suddenly a messenger from the king summoned the general to his defence against a plot to take the king's life, and de Britto was saved for the time being.

For twenty-two days \* he was held in uncertainty, then taken rapidly, barefooted, to Ramnad, the capital of the Marava kingdom. There he was lodged first in a horse stable, then in a cell. When the Brahmans came to dispute with him, even in his suffering he courageously combated them. Finally the king received him in the palace, listened to him, and accorded to him life and liberty; but he forbade him to preach on pain of death because he condemned idolatry, polygamy and robbery.

In consequence† of all this experience, when de Britto visited the father provincial, he embraced him and offered to send him to Portugal for more missionaries. The father threw himself at the provincial's feet and tried to beg off, saying he had made a vow never to return to Portugal: but the provincial commanded, and he yielded. He embarked at Goa for Lisbon early in 1688, and after a happy voyage disembarked at the end of the year. Great and small wished to see him, and he was honoured at court. He retained his Indian costume, drank no wine, and slept on the hard floor on a bear skin. He visited the University of Coimbra, and selected six students to go with him. With others they were prepared by him for the labours before them. He had to get resources as well as men, in addition to certain revenues assigned by the king for Madura.

The king‡ wished to keep de Britto in Portugal, but an assembly declared that he ought to return. The voyage lasted seven months, during which an epidemic carried off more than forty passengers. He was received with joy at Goa, and the provincial appointed him to work on the fishing coast of Coromandel. The French colony at Pondicherry had rendered signal service to the Portuguese mission, and when de Britto went there the French Jesuits cordially entertained him.

Since de Britto's expulsion other missionaries had not dared to enter Marava, lest the neophytes should suffer. But de Britto's heart was there; so he put himself under the protection of a lord

\* Mello, 1686.

† *Id.*

‡ *Id.*



who was a vassal of the Madura Nayakar, and obtained leave to fix his residence on the borders of Marava. There he baptized 8,000 neophytes at one time, and during the ceremony had to have his arms supported by catechists. His church was too small and he secretly established three chapels in Marava itself.

A prince of Marava,\* named Tadia Tevar, was sick unto death and sent ambassadors for de Britto, promising

**A royal Convert.** to join him. A catechist was sent, who healed the prince. Again he sent for the father. De Britto hesitated, but finally determined to improve the opportunity. Tadia Tevar received him "like an angel." At first his wives were an obstacle, but at length he sent them away, providing for them like sisters. De Britto baptized him and spent several days in his palace.

These events stirred up enemies. The first was the youngest wife of Tadia Tevar, who tried to make him change his mind. Failing in this she threw herself at the feet of the king, who was her uncle, begging him to avenge her of this wizard. She also went to the chief of the Brahmans and found him only too ready. He called the Brahmans together, and they told the king that all the people were embracing the gods of the Parangis. The king, oppressed by the cries of his niece, ordered the churches to be burned and the leaders to be brought before him. The soldiers went in four bands, one to each chapel, and one against the lord of Madura that protected de Britto. These events occupied the years 1690-1692.

On the 8th January, 1693, de Britto, having celebrated mass, advised all to withdraw to their houses, and remained alone. Soldiers came, covered him with blows, and put him in chains. Others captured and brought in three neophytes, who were also chained. Soldiers held the chains of the four prisoners, and made them run behind horses. De Britto was constantly falling, but they beat him along for four hours until they reached a convenient place for the night. There they mounted all the prisoners on a car to be gazed at. Thus they were taken to Ramnad, where they arrived on January 11th, and were thrown into vile jails.

The Brahmans urged the king to hasten the father's death, and suggested execution by sorcery. He consented, and they held the sacrifice called *satturu sangaram* (destruction of enemies). It failed, and they tried a second time, saying he would die in five days, but he lived. The king in despair

\* Mello, 1686.

caused de Britto to appear before him ; and a captain struck him rudely, but he turned the other cheek. The king believed that he neutralised the effect of the satturu sangaram sacrifice, and asked whether a musket ball could hit him. De Britto said it could, and uncovered his breast revealing his breviary. This the king thought must be a charm, and ordered his execution by other means.

When the soldiers started to carry out the king's order the Christian prince Tadia Tevar forbade them to stir, and boldly told the king that if he dared to execute de Britto his own punishment would not long tarry. The king pretended to yield and condemned him to exile. But when his friends started to accompany him they were sent back. He was really sent to another Marava prince to be tortured to death.

This other prince was a leper and offered to save de Britto if he would heal him. Failing in this he ordered him to worship Siva, which he refused to do. One Muttupillei was then ordered to behead him ; but Muttupillei avowed himself a Christian. The governor was next ordered to do it, and was willing. During the night of February 3rd, de Britto wrote with charcoal and straw the words, " Arrived January 31st ; awaiting death."

The next day the governor gave the fatal order and de Britto fell upon the ground thanking God. They took him to a plain, and a soldier was ordered to strike off his head. De Britto asked permission to pray, and did so for fifteen minutes : he then embraced his executioner and knelt before him. Seeing a charm the soldier first cut the cord, making a gash ; then with one blow he left the head hanging on the breast. He then cut off the hands and feet and suspended them to the trunk with the head, and in this condition the body was exposed on the gallows. It was finally burned. Neophytes saved some relics. The scimitar was sent to King Don Pedro II. De Britto was forty-six years old when he died.

From 1755 Portugal ceased to send any aid. The priests of Goa were put in jail, and the order was suppressed by the Pope. They had to live on alms. Of thirteen priests in Mysore the greater part were dead ; of three who were left it was said that each was like a walking hospital. The mission to the Pareians lasted until the death of the Jesuit fathers. One had commenced in 1746 and with another was working in 1755. In 1759 when the order

#### Suppression of the Jesuits.

of Jesuits was suppressed in Portugal, a vessel came to Goa with orders from the king, and all the fathers, 127 in number, were put in prison and distributed among the monasteries of Goa. Then they were all crowded together in a jail where the windows were walled up and the door shut, except when the police were present.

On the 2nd December, 1759,\* all were embarked for Portugal on a vessel fitted to receive not more than forty or fifty. There they were treated as prisoners of war, receiving but one meal a day. Twenty-six other passengers were loaded with irons for showing compassion to the unfortunate priests. Twenty-four priests died of scurvy. The rest struggled with death five months and debarked at Lisbon May 24, 1760. Some were taken to the prisons of Taferies, one was sent to the castle of St. Julien: one group of ten Italians, three Germans, two Spaniards, one Frenchman, and one of some other nationality were cast into dungeons, than which the subterranean galleries of the Catacombs could hardly be worse. Air-holes in the ceiling were scarce; there were two doors, but they opened only to the police.

**End of the  
Mission.**

Thus ended one of the most remarkable chapters of the world's history. Whatever else may be said of these missionaries they could truthfully say of themselves that they had been "in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft." More than thrice had they been beaten with rods, at least thrice suffered shipwreck, many a night and day had been in the deep. They had been "in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from [their] countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." If they must needs glory they certainly could glory of the things that concerned their weakness.

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\* Letter dated April 16, 1780.

## CONCLUSION.

### *Approved Methods.*

IN estimating the work and results of the mission we find that in some things the Jesuits have been followed by all Indian Missions since their day, though not all have been as successful in the results secured. One point of emphasis was the thorough acquisition of the vernaculars. Much of their success was due to their acquired knowledge of Sanskrit the literary language of the Brahmans, Telugu the language of the Court, and Tamil the tongue of the common people.

**Acquisition of the Vernaculars.** Scholars as many of the Jesuits were, they inevitably valued literature; they also circulated many of their own compositions written on palm leaf. So much was this method of instruction valued that even Xavier, who did not acquire the vernacular at all, left palm leaf books containing Christian doctrine in many towns and villages. Hilary, the martyr, was converted by reading a Christian book.

**Circulation of Literature.** A body trained and organized as carefully as the Society of Jesus could not conduct its missionary operations in any other than an organized way. And in the distribution of their work and the appointment of leaders responsible for its guidance they maintained a force that conserved their results in a remarkable way. At the same time they did not ignore the need of living Christians to make their organization effective. De Nobili declared that Christians were the kernel of the Christianity he wished to establish. Nor did he weaken his organization by demanding of his Christians forms of piety impossible to attain. This was shown in his effort to dissuade Alexis from "renouncing the world" because of his too ardent imagination and overbearing disposition.

**Efficient Organization.** In a land where polygamy was practised, and sanctioned by religion, it required moral courage to uphold a system of teaching that persistently condemned it. And, to their credit be it said, they not only preached the sacredness of the marriage tie, but instilled this

**Condemnation of Polygamy.**

doctrine into their Christians to a considerable degree. De Britto was banished from Ramnad because of his opposition to polygamy among other things. One of their converts had learned from the Christians in Madura city, when there was no missionary nor catechist there, that his two wives were a hindrance to his admission to their community. Another even persuaded his Hindu caste people to pass a law against it for their caste.

Their opposition to idolatry was real and definite. This did not require the same amount of moral courage as did their opposition to polygamy, for if they yielded to idolatry they gave up the very *raison d'être* of their mission. They taught that idols were devils, and could not but oppose idolatry as the worship of devils. De Britto amid all his sufferings condemned it. De Nobili admitted that neophytes should not adorn themselves with any signs of idols, and when a lord of the court wished to be treated as an inquirer made him remove all idolatrous emblems and burn his idols. The Christians not infrequently brought down persecution upon themselves by breaking or otherwise insulting the idols.

Many instances of personal courage show that the missionaries were not wanting in that attribute of manliness. De Nobili especially showed his courage in repeated instances. When all seemed to forsake him in Madura, and even Fernandez advised him to flee, he remained at his post and won the respect of the chief who could protect him. In Salem likewise, when he was accused of causing a "desolating malady" and the king was bent on exiling him, he refused to fly, and by his courage caused his enemies to yield.

The training of a Jesuit undoubtedly fits him to endure pain and suffering. And the history of the Madura Mission contains repeated instances of their willingness to work where suffering was sure to follow. One instance has been recorded of a missionary's inflicting a rude discipline on himself for the sake of influencing his Christians. They were not alone in this fortitude of spirit, for Indian ascetics can bear pain with as much stolid indifference; and in all ages the love of Christ can make the most sensitive souls face torture and death without flinching. But the Jesuits in Madura seem to have made a speciality of it, and by their example to have stimulated their followers to the same endurance; and they are entitled to the credit of it.

#### Opposition to Idolatry.

#### Personal Courage.

#### Endurance of Suffering.



While enduring suffering themselves they did much to alleviate the sufferings of others by treating the sick and healing diseases. Much of their treatment was in the line of supposed possession of devils, because of the universal belief in such possession in India as in Europe. But in doing medical work they only did that which was done by Christ Himself and all missions in His name ever since He lived on earth.

*Disputed Methods.*

From the first de Nobili denied that he was a Parangi on the ground that it connoted qualities that did not inhere in him. But in this denial he disregarded the fundamental idea of the term, which was a European. The term was the Indian corruption of the word Frank and was first and always applied to Europeans. Unfortunately for the honour of Europeans the first individuals of that race known to the Indians were Portuguese of unprincipled character and dissolute lives, supported by the military power of their nation and therefore haughty and unsympathetic toward the customs and feelings of the Indians. De Nobili could truly disavow these characteristics of his race, but not the race itself. And the reason that he was constantly on the defensive against the charge of being a Parangi was that the charge was fundamentally true, although the accretions of character suggested by the name did not exist in him. By a mode of life absolutely different from that exemplified by the Portuguese he tried to prove himself of a different race. And yet later on Portuguese Jesuits worked with those of other European descent, and curiously enough de Nobili in his last days lived under the protection of the very Portuguese he had disavowed.

The disavowal of connection with Parangis did not meet the difficulty squarely and discounted the whole structure of the mission from beginning to end. Even the pandaram order of missionaries, who were established in order to reach the lower castes, were afraid to add a little meat to their food for fear of being discovered to be Parangis.

When the missionaries of the American Board first settled in Madura, two hundred years after de Nobili's time, they were called the Pareias of the Americans; and they had to show by their life and work that the stigma did not attach to them whether they ate meat or not.

De Nobili had a splendid opportunity to show that a European could be pure in character, clean in habits, in sympathy with the feelings of Indians, and appreciative of their language and literature and history, and that the Christian spirit required this of every one. And for this purpose there was no need of assuming names applicable only to Indians, such as Brahman, sannyasi, pandaram, raja.

Appreciation of the customs of a country by a foreigner is always a bond of fellowship between the foreigner and the people. And the assumption of the costume of the people may be expedient at times. But it does not change a European into a Brahman to have Brahman servants and abstain from meat and wear a salmon-coloured cloth and the kudumi tuft on the head. To use native habits and manners to conceal identity is not a true foundation for mission work, which is essentially the introduction of foreign elements into the religious life. But the attitude toward Parangis assumed by de Nobili required him to adopt *in toto* the customs and manner of life of Brahmans irrespective of any questions of expediency. Worse than that, it drove him to the adoption of the cord, the kudumi, sandal paste, and ashes; and, when these were objected to, he had to find arguments to prove that they were social or civil usages that could be dissociated from idolatry. And the easy way to hold this position was to insist that paste and ashes could be made useful by the blessing of the priest, and that the cord could be changed by having a different number of strands and that the kudumi belonged to Brahmans, of whom he was one. This was a fatal mingling of unessential ceremonials with essential elements of character.

The overwhelming power of caste distinctions ruling Indian society determined the attitude to be taken in other matters, and de Nobili approached it by accepting its principles, and himself claiming to belong to a caste that entitled him to be called Brahman. The holy spiritual law, he declared, did not oblige a man to renounce his caste. This position required him to treat as low caste Fernandez and the other priests that failed to observe caste distinctions, and he would have nothing to do with them. This was a false position, because foreign to his national institutions, to the foundation of the Society of Jesus, and to the teachings of Christ. It was followed almost inevitably by the secret ministra-

**Attitude toward  
Indian Customs.**

**Attitude toward  
Caste.**

tions to low caste converts and the separation of the missionaries into Brahman and pandaram orders. And yet in this matter de Nobili's influence has survived the suppression of the Jesuits and all subsequent enactments of the Roman Catholic authorities. For though they condemned the use of symbols connected with idolatry they have adopted his views on caste. In recent times Strickland, admitting that caste has its disadvantages in that when pushed too far it destroys true patriotism and hinders the development of talent, yet declares that it is "an insurmountable barrier to communism and all its attendant evils, and gives a powerful support to those social distinctions which constitute society." Marshall, Strickland's coadjutor in his book on Catholic Missions, quotes Bishop Canoz of Madura as saying "Experience has shown that *caste* is a purely civil distinction, based on social ideas which exist in the West as well as in the East, but exaggerated in Asiatic communities both by antiquity of custom and immobility of character and institutions."

So far as caste is a mere distinction it is undoubtedly based on social ideas. But it is vastly more than that; it is an institution based upon birth, and birth as an indication of character in previous embodiments. It dominates the entire life of the Hindu people, family, social, political, and religious, and holds every individual in its iron grasp. The last census of the Madras Presidency has this to say about it—"A man's caste affects his life from its beginning to its end. It frequently determines his occupation, and it often fixes his residence for him, most villages being divided into caste quarters. His social position, and with it his friends and the limits within which he may marry, are equally decided by his caste; and so are his food, his drink, his name, and even sometimes the clothes which he and his women-kind may wear." The census also arranges the 350 castes enumerated into ten groups ranked as follows:—(1) Brahman; (2) Kshatriya; (3) Vaisya; (4) Good Sudras; (5) Sudras who habitually employ Brahmans as family priests, and whose touch pollutes to a slight degree; (6) Sudras who occasionally employ Brahmans as family priests, and whose touch pollutes; (7) Sudras who do not employ Brahmans as family priests and whose touch pollutes; (8) Castes which pollute even without touching, but do not eat beef; (9) Castes which eat beef, but do not pollute except by touch; (10) Castes which eat beef and pollute even without touching.

For the Jesuit missionaries then to accept the distinctions of caste meant the subjection of the Christian life to bonds and shackles that enslaved it, and failed to give it the full freedom of the truth. It was on this account that de Nobili had to be continually maintaining that he was not a Parangi, and had nothing to do with Parangis. Hence too the false valuation of converts, whereby those brought in from the Brahmans were supposed to create the moral impression on all castes.

Some modern missions have so strongly felt the tendency of caste to thwart the true progress of the Christian life that they have adopted vigorous measures for extirpating it. They have gone to the opposite extreme in assuming that the spirit of caste could be eradicated by legislation. Rather should Christian leaders ignore its dictates, and by their example and teaching promulgate the brotherhood of all Christians in Christ, and thus blaze the way out for their weaker brethren. Certainly it ill becomes foreigners to subject themselves to its despotic claims. De Nobili seems to have had still another reason for introducing Christianity under the caste system, and that was to oppose the effect of Fernandez's tendency to make it a foreign importation. Fernandez called Christianity "Parangi-markam" (the Parangi way), and de Nobili had a good point against him in that. But in opposing that extreme he went to the other and practically made it a caste-markam.

The superstitions connected with idolatry were unhesitatingly condemned by Jesuit and Dominican, pope and prelate alike. But when the same emblems and methods were used in the name of Christ they were accepted as means of grace. It was not then the superstition in the use of such things that condemned them, but the names under which they were used; everything connected with the idols was in their minds the worship of devils. De Nobili saw this and drew the logical conclusion that if sacred ashes and the cord and sandal paste and purifications were blessed by the priest in the name of Christ they were changed from superstitious emblems to means of grace. Fernandez and other opposers were not so logical, and were at a disadvantage in the dispute with de Nobili. They never condemned de Nobili for asking the general to send him "objects of piety, images, medals and beads." They were habitually using such "objects" themselves. But wherein are they any better than sandal paste

**Attitude toward  
Superstition.**



and the cord if the latter were blessed by the priest? If the use of Indian emblems was superstitious, and it surely was, equally superstitious was the use of beads and gold leaf and medals blessed by the priest.

From this point of view there was a certain pettiness and waste of energy in Cardinal Tournon's decree banning, among other more important matters, the saffron colour and the hundred threads in a woman's marriage badge, the dishes containing betel, etc., at weddings, the breaking of cocoanuts (allowed if done privately), ablutions, and sacred ashes. But equally petty was the bull of Pope Gregory XV., vindicating de Nobili and according to the Brahmans and other Gentiles the cord and kudumi, sandal paste and purification of the body, because of his "desire to procure the conversion of these nations."

And yet Fernandez and the papal authorities were right in their consciousness of the incompatibility of de Nobili's attitude with the spirit of Christ. Had they pursued de Nobili's logical method they would have condemned themselves with him for the superstitious use of "objects of piety, images, medals and beads." But they were not as logical as he and could only see superstition in emblems used by idolaters.

De Nobili made much of introducing Christian truth in an Indian garb. He connected the holy spiritual law of Hinduism with that of Christianity; but

**The Form of Christianity.**

he did this to introduce a system that was foreign to the religious thought of India. His failure may have been due to the false attitude he assumed. But the fact that Christianity did introduce new and foreign elements of religion requires acknowledgment in missionary efforts; to overlook it is to weaken the foundation, which is the spirit of Christ. Much as has been made of the need of an oriental Christianity for the orient it cannot be overlooked that in the Syrian Christian community of Malabar India has had an oriental form of Christianity presented to it for not less than fifteen hundred years. The Syrian Christians never had a western form of Christianity. And yet that oriental form of their religion has not made it effective for the conversion of the peoples around them. The fact is that Christianity teaches and worships the same God that is the goal of all religions, and has much in common with all religions, and the new elements it introduces in the personal relation of the soul to the Heavenly Father and the Saviour of mankind are



neither eastern nor western, but human and universal. These elements are foreign to every religion less human and universal, and to every doctrine of rites and ceremonies as efficacious in themselves.

While de Nobili's great experiment failed, yet the mission maintained itself successfully for 150 years. The times were those of wars and rumours of wars, of injustice and oppression, of turbulence and devastation, of famine and flood. No ruler was supreme any length of time in his own territory, nor at all beyond the reach of his army. War was continually being waged to hold tributary kings to their allegiance, or to repel foreign foes. More wars were threatened and ever ready to break out. Injustice might overtake the missionaries, only to be followed by equal injustice to their oppressors. The people had no assurance of safety from week to week. They would plunder their neighbours only to be plundered in turn. When they had been weakened by men, wild beasts were ready to devastate their fields and houses. Drought would follow war and turn into famine, and floods would sweep away beasts and crops and men. People believed in the possession of human beings by devils and spirits of all kinds, and in the power of magic to expel both devils and diseases. In such times and among such people this body of trained men, holding a commission from the unseen world, as they claimed, and fearless of torture and even death, exercised great influence and accomplished remarkable results.

Their method was to gain influence by any and all means. To this end they had no scruples in using funds in their hands for presents to disarm enemies and secure the favour of princes. They would enter into struggles between chieftains in order to play off one against another if they could thereby avert the hostility of either. They commanded the respect of the educated by their own scholarship and linguistic ability. They won the confidence of the poor by living and suffering with them. They exercised authority over the minds of the credulous by assuming to perform miraculous cures through their blessing bestowed upon objects worn upon the person. They accomplished surprising results by gaining control over the mental processes of diseased and afflicted persons. Above all they committed themselves unreservedly to the endurance of persecution when it met them. They baptized immense numbers, but a large proportion

of these were aged persons or little children or the sick and dying. Strickland declares that comparatively few Brahmans became Christians. He also states that one of the superiors had baptized above 40,000 persons, and adds that they were chiefly sick children.

*Later History.*

When the Jesuits were suppressed in all parts of the world, because of their intrigues and their quarrel with the Jansenists, their work in India was left to a few Goanese priests on the coast. In 1795 the Paris Society of Foreign Missions tried to resume their work in India, and this move led to a long feud with the Indo-Portuguese clergy, called the Indo-Portuguese schism. The Jesuits were restored a few years after, and in 1838 returned to India. But the schism continued until 1886, when Pope Leo XIII ended it by establishing the Catholic hierarchy in India, including the bishopric of Trichinopoly for the south. Since then their work has flourished again, and now in the regions of their old Madura Mission there is a Roman Catholic community of more than 450,000, and a Protestant Christian community of 150,000.

Strickland has an interesting comment on the races of Europe best fitted to be "missioners." He says, "the greater part of the missionaries who have toiled in the new mission of Madura...have been French. Some were Italians, and some few English. The Frenchman is undoubtedly the best missionary amongst the natives; for though often deficient in perseverance under difficulties in the ordinary concerns of life, he possesses a singular power of applying his whole energies to attaining the immediate object in view. When he devotes himself to religion, his character loses its egotism, and acquires a motive for action which secures constant effort, and makes him ever ready to renew his sacrifice of self, and show his consideration for others both with natural politeness and supernatural charity. The Italian seldom leaves his own country, and remains too strongly wedded to his early ideas ever to be able entirely to cast them off like the Frenchman. He is therefore less supple and amiable, and less winning in his way of acting with the natives. The Englishman is the least fitted to succeed with the native, especially in a country where his race is dominant. However excellent and

supernatural his motives and intentions may be, the great national fault of preference of what is English over everything else constantly crops out ; his presence is not only useful, but necessary in the great centres of European power in India, where none can succeed so well with his own countrymen ; but his place is not amongst the timid Hindus, toiling, with daily patience, to bring souls into the fold of Christ."

If this comparison be sound as between the three races in the Roman Catholic missions it must be said that de Nobili, the Italian of the old mission, and Sewell, the Englishman of the present mission, are splendid exceptions to the majority of their respective countrymen. But missions, Protestant as well as Catholic, have been learning from each other. And no race of missionaries can show more splendid successes in winning souls to the noblest Christian life yet exemplified in India than the English. Their converts are a noble and influential body of people from Cape Comorin to Peshawar, a body drawn from many castes and recruited from Parsees, Sikhs and Muhamadans, as well as Hindus.

And other races have supplied new elements to the missionary force. The Germanic races have brought their scholarship and practical methods, the Scots their splendid moral and educational force of character, the Irish their versatility, and the Americans their strenuous and independent spirit. Besides, the "timid Hindus" have disappeared and a new class of Indians has come on the scene, conscious of strength and ready to take an honourable place in the ranks of the world's workers. And all races are drawing nearer together in their common love for the Master and in devotion to His work of redemption.











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